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ON THE DIVINE AUTHORITY OF SOLOMON'S SONG.

Dr. J. P. Smith, in a paper which appeared in our Magazine for December last, referred, with his accustomed candour, to the following Essay as "the best defence of the inspiration and divine authority of Solomon's Song which it has been his happiness to read." It was written by the Rev. Benjamin Rice, now a missionary in India, but formerly a member of the church under the pastoral care of Dr. Bennett, and a student of the College under the tuition of Dr. Smith. It was inserted in *The College Repository* for December, 1834, and March, 1835; but as that respectable Miscellany was only printed for private circulation, and has since been discontinued, it is scarcely accessible to the public. The Editor, therefore, immediately announced his intention to publish it, and it has been in type for the past three months, but the necessity that is laid upon him to secure such a variety of matter in his pages as shall make the Magazine generally interesting, has compelled him to withhold until now this, as well as another valued article in connection with this subject.

It will be readily acknowledged, that the study of the Scriptures is of primary importance to the Christian student. Without a deep, a comprehensive, and an accurate acquaintance with these, he can never be qualified to take upon him the responsible office of the gospel ministry, and to stand forth as the spiritual instructor of his fellow-men. Nor will such an acquaintance with the contents of the Bible be alone sufficient. This holy book professes to be a revelation from the Most High God; he must therefore be able to defend the sacred volume against the attacks of its adversaries, and show that he is not following "a cunningly devised fable." And if among the various books of which it is composed there be one of doubtful authority, the evidence by which that is supported, unquestionably demands his most serious attention and careful investigation.

On no book of the Old Testament is there a greater diversity of opinion among Christians themselves than on the Canticles, or Song of Solomon. The majority consider it as an inspired book, while others affirm it to be merely a human composition; the former regard it as a sacred allegory, the latter as a mere amatory effusion.

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The object of the present article is to discuss this much-disputed point.

I. THOSE WHO MAINTAIN THAT THE SONG OF SOLOMON IS TO BE REGARDED AS OF DIVINE AUTHORITY, urge the following arguments in support of their opinion:—

1. *That there appears to be evidence sufficient to show that it is the genuine production of Solomon, who was an inspired writer.* This is proved by the title of the poem itself, by the authority of ancient versions, and by internal evidence.

It is admitted that the titles of the sacred books of the Old or New Testament are not to be regarded as either of divine authority, or of very high antiquity; but this appears to form a part of the poem itself, which commences thus:—The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's; doubtless one of those mentioned 1 Kings iv. 32, where it is said, that "his songs were a thousand and five," of which this is called by way of eminence and distinction, according to the Hebrew idiom, שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים, *the Song of Songs*, or, *the most excellent Song*. The only question to be determined here—is, whether the prefix *Lamed*, employed in the original, intimates that it was written *by*, or *concerning* Solomon. Admitting that the Hebrew prefix may sometimes bear the latter rendering, it is comparatively very seldom; its certain, usual, and authorized meanings are, *to*, *for*, *with*, or *by*. That *Lamed* is used for *by*, as indicating the author, appears from the titles of the Psalms, and other Hebrew poems. Thus several of them are said to be, *of* (or *by*) David, and they are attributed to him in the New Testament by our Lord and his Apostles. So we read of the psalms of Asaph, the prayer of Moses, of Habakkuk, &c., in all which places the *Lamed* is used. It has been remarked, that "the other rendering, *concerning* Solomon, appears to have originated with the allegorical Rabbins, and Christian fathers; who, attributing the poem to the Messiah, as the anti-type of Solomon, availed themselves of the equivocation of the Hebrew prefix as an argument in their favour."

Ancient versions likewise attribute the poem to Solomon. The LXX. reads thus:—ᾠσμα ᾠσμάτων ὃ ἐστὶ Σαλωμών. And the Syriac may be rendered—"The Wisdom of Wisdoms of the same Solomon:" that is, the same who wrote the Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. The Targum, or Chaldee paraphrase on the book, commences thus:—"The song, or hymn, which Solomon the prophet, king of Israel, delivered by the spirit of prophecy before Jehovah, the Lord of the whole world."

Internal evidence would also lead us to suppose that Solomon was the author. For instance, we find the rich furniture of his palace alluded to (i. 5). "I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon." "In fact," says the Rev. T. H. Horne,* "all the leading circumstances of Solomon's life, in a religious point of view, appear to be

* Introd. to Crit. Study of the Scriptures, vol. iv. part 1. chap. 3. sec. 5.

either alluded to, or implied in this ancient poem, and therefore render it probable that it was the production of some writer in his age, if it were not his own composition." That it could not have been written, as some have contended, in so late an age as the Babylonish captivity, appears, from the mention made of the towers of David and Lebanon, the fish-pools of Heshbon, and the vineyards of En-gedi. These beautiful objects of art were then doubtless passing into decay: they must have been greatly injured by time, had they not fallen into the hands of a foreign enemy; but it is impossible to suppose that they remained entire, much less objects for poetic composition, after the city had been plundered and burned. Beside, this was not a time to celebrate marriages, and write nuptial poems: the poetic compositions of this period were elegies and lamentations, psalms of confession, and earnest supplications for divine mercy. Nor does it appear that an author can be pointed out in this period, to whom the book can with any probability be referred.

2. *It was received by the ancient Jews, and has been continued in the canon of Scripture, by the Christians in all ages.*

Ezra is believed to have been chiefly concerned in revising and arranging the books of Scripture. "He wrote," says Bishop Warburton, "and we may believe acted, by the inspiration of the Most High, amid the last blaze indeed, yet in the full lustre of expiring prophecy. And such a man would not have placed any book that was not sacred in the same volume with the Law and the Prophets." Since, therefore, he has placed the Canticles in the canon of Scripture, we are authorized to infer, that it was deemed a sacred book by the Jews at that early period. A Greek translation of it was also made by the Jewish authors of the Septuagint, who flourished about two centuries before Christ, and still forms a part of the Alexandrian version.

The opinion which the Jews entertained concerning it may be gathered from their writings. Aben Ezra, in his preface to this book, says, "Far be it from me to affirm that the Song of Songs should treat of carnal pleasure, for all things are spoken figuratively in it. And, indeed, unless there had been the greatest dignity in it, it would not have been placed among the books of Scripture. *Nor is there any controversy about that.*" In *Midras Shir*, a Jewish historical and allegorical commentary on the song, it is said, "that their wise men had disputed about the authority of Ecclesiastes, but never had any debate about the divine authority of this book." Rabbi Akiba expresses himself thus:—"Far be it from any Israelite to say that the Song of Songs pollutes the hands, or is not holy, because the whole world is not of so great value as that day wherein the Song of Songs was given to Israel; for all the *Hagiographa* are holy, but the Song of Songs is most holy; and if there hath been any difference of opinion about Solomon's writings, it hath only been about Ecclesiastes." "Ten songs are sung in this world," says the Targum before referred to, "but this song is the most excellent of them all." They likewise compared the three books which bear Solomon's name to the three parts of the temple which he

built; the Proverbs to the porch; the Ecclesiastes to the holy place; and the Canticles to the most holy; to signify that it is the treasury of the highest and most sacred mysteries of Scripture.

With the same conviction of the sacred character of the work, it was rendered into Greek, in the second century of the Christian era, by Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodosian. Origen, who wrote early in the third century, on the authority of those learned Jews, who were contemporary with him, and whom he was in the habit of consulting respecting the authority and literal import of their sacred books, inserted it in his Hexapla, and wrote some homilies upon it, explaining its mystical sense. Josephus, in his answer to Apion, gives a catalogue of the Jewish books, and in the third class of such as related to moral instruction, includes the Song of Songs. It occurs in the catalogue of books of the Old Testament made in the second century by Melito, bishop of Sardis in Lydia, who travelled into Palestine on purpose to learn the number of these books, and who made the first catalogue of the Hebrew Scriptures. It is cited by Ignatius (who had been a disciple of the apostle John), about the beginning of the second century, as a book of authority in the church at Antioch. It is enumerated in the list of canonical books occurring in the Synopsis attributed to Athanasius, who flourished in the third century, and in the catalogues of Jerome and Rufinus, towards the close of the fourth century, since which time the Song of Songs has maintained its place in the sacred canon.

3. *This poem, when spiritually interpreted, contains nothing but what is in perfect agreement with the other books of Scripture.*

It has ever been considered a strong argument in favour of the divine original of the sacred writings, that men of different education, faculties, and occupations, living at different times and in distant places, and delivering their instructions in every variety of style, should all concur uniformly in carrying on one consistent plan of supernatural doctrines; all constantly propose the same invariable truth; flowing indeed through different channels, but evidently proceeding from the same fountain. Now if the Song of Solomon can be included in this remark, we shall certainly be furnished with a considerable argument in its favour. And we find that when divested of that veil of eastern imagery, under which its true meaning lies concealed, it does harmonize with every other part of the word of God.

"I am bold to affirm," says a writer in the Congregational Magazine (1830, vol. vii. p. 235), "that this book uses *few figures*, and advances *no principles*, but what are admitted and asserted by both prophets and apostles. The full proof of this assertion would lead us to expound the whole poem, but we will briefly notice some of the most prominent images and allusions. Chap. i. The very name of *Solomon* (the Peaceable) points to Him whom the Scriptures call 'our Peace,' 'the Prince,' and 'the Lord of peace.' (Eph. ii. 14, 15; Isa. ix. 6; 2 Thess. iii. 18.) The characters here introduced, 'the Bridegroom,' 'the bride,' and 'the virgins her companions,' are all elsewhere spiritually applied—God was the Husband of Israel, and Christ is called 'the Bridegroom' of his church. The church is

'the bride, the Lamb's wife;' and our Lord's first disciples are called 'friends of the Bridegroom,' and 'children of the bride-chamber.' (Matt. ix. 15; John iii. 29.)

"When the bride expresses her desire to be *drawn*, or attracted by the love of the Bridegroom, we are instantly reminded of God's language by Hosea (xi. 4.) 'I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love;' or the promise of our Lord himself, 'I will draw all men unto me.' (John xii. 32.)

"In chap. ii. the bride resembles herself (as I understand it) to the rose and the lily; and the same images are repeatedly applied to the church of God by different prophets. Isaiah (xxxv. 1.) says, 'Israel shall blossom as the rose' (the very word here used); and Hosea (xiv. 5,) that they 'shall grow as the lily.'

"The resemblance of the church to a *dove* is in perfect harmony with our Lord's making that bird a pattern to his disciples; also 'the voice of the dove' is repeatedly alluded to by the prophets above quoted, as the language of penitence, and 'the singing of birds' naturally expresses religious joy. The allusion in the close of this chapter to *foxes* as the types of tyrants and of heretics, is quite in the Scripture style. 'O Israel, thy prophets are like the foxes in the deserts' (Ezek. xiii. 4;) and the term is by our Lord himself applied to Herod. (Luke xiii. 32.)

"In ver. 7 of chap. iv. when the spouse is described as 'all fair,' and having 'no spot,' it not only reminds us of Eph. v. 27, 'having no spot or wrinkle,' but the language is so similar, that we can scarcely avoid concluding the apostle had this in view. The comparison of her virtues to the fruits of the garden and the orchard, and the fragrant grove, is frequent in Scripture; and the image of living *waters* is used both by the prophets and by our Lord himself in John iv. 14, and other passages."

These parallels, with many others which might be adduced, appear to be amply sufficient to justify the sentiment advanced.

4. *The impartiality manifested throughout the Bible, in faithfully exhibiting the faults as well as the excellences of those exalted characters, whose history it records for our instruction and edification, has ever been regarded as a proof that it is the word of God, and that its authors wrote under the inspiration of the Divine Spirit.*

Accordingly, we find Solomon, not merely extolling the beauties of the bride, but likewise exhibiting her defects. (Chap. i. ver. 5, 6.) "I am *black*," as well as "comely, O daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon. Look not upon me because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me: my mother's children were angry with me; they made me keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept." And again, chap. v. ver. 2, 3, the spouse is represented as neglectful of her beloved; so that although she heard his voice, "knocking, and saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled,"—a request urged also by a plea of distress, "for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night,"—yet began making excuses, and replied "I have put off my coat, how shall I

put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?" "Now," observes Dr. Gill, "were it a mere human composure of Solomon's celebrating the amours between him and Pharaoh's daughter, would it be reasonable to suppose, that he should so manifestly and openly declare the defects and imperfections of his bride? But if considered as a divine poem, expressing the mutual love between Christ and his church, it agrees very well with other parts of the sacred writings, wherein the infirmities of God's own people are not concealed, not even of those who were themselves the penmen of them, which is a strong proof of their divine authority."

II. What has been already advanced will tend, it is presumed, to establish the Divine authority of the Canticles; but OBJECTIONS have been urged, which, unless they can be satisfactorily answered, will lead to a different conclusion. These, therefore, merit our consideration.

1. *It has been asserted that the poem bears marks of having been written by some other than Solomon.*

Many eminent biblical critics have maintained this opinion, among whom is the learned Dr. J. P. Smith, who thinks it is evident, from a passage in chap. vi. (4—10), which he says* "appears to be an exquisitely delicate, but most deeply severe reflection upon Solomon's shameful polygamy, which the bridegroom, nobly exulting, contrasts with his own purity and happiness, as the sole husband of a sole wife. The bridegroom describes his wife's simple dress, without the gorgeoussness which covered the dishonour and misery of the persons about to be mentioned; and her native modest beauty standing in need of no art to set it off, yet forming such a contrast to the looks of those unhappy inhabitants of the palace, that its very loveliness struck them with awe. But no translation can do justice to the three remaining verses. The following attempt is as close as I can make it. Let the *Hebrew* reader observe the *masculine* pronoun, applied to the queens, conveying the cutting insinuation that polygamy had despoiled them of the true honour of their sex, and the contrast so studiously marked by the thrice-repeated *feminine* pronoun, in the sweet picture of the uncontaminated bride. Then let the reader observe the burst of admiration in the inquiry made by the pitiable victims, if not themselves the seductresses of the criminal king. The poet does not impute to them envious feeling, he does not aggravate their dishonour by exhibiting them as indulging any malignity; but the sight of the spotless bride, unadorned, unattended, even pierces them with terror, and they are "abashed to see how awful goodness is!"

Sixty they; queens!

Eighty! mistresses!

And waiting maids, without number!

One, she; my dove, my perfect one.

One, she; to her mother (*an honour*)

* Script Test. to the Messiah, vol. 1. book i. chap. ii. Note A.

Unsullied, she; to her who bare her (*an honour*).

The daughters beheld her and blessed her;

The queens and the mistresses, and they praised her (*saying*)

"Who is this that looketh forth as the rosy morn?"

Fair as the bright moon! unsullied as the burning sun!

Terrible as a bannered host!"

"I now appeal to the judicious reader," says Dr. S., "whether this passage does not amount to a very high probability, I might even say a moral certainty, that the poem was not written by Solomon, but by a far happier person among his contemporaries, yet unknown to posterity."

The force of this argument seems to rest upon the question, what queens and concubines are here referred to. "It does not appear natural to suppose that they were those of Solomon himself," says Mr. Williams, in his Commentary on this book, "for I do not think it probable that these would have been disposed so to admire and extol a rival; but if we refer this passage to the court and family of Pharaoh, and the compliments his daughter received on setting out for Judea, I think the passage becomes more natural, spirited, and beautiful."

Or we may suppose it to refer to the surrounding courts, among which, notwithstanding all their splendour, no one was to be found comparable to Pharaoh's daughter. That this was not an enumeration of Solomon's wives, is farther probable, from there being more concubines than wives; whereas Solomon's wives were afterwards more than double the number of his concubines.

Another objection to Solomon's being the author is taken from the name of David being spelt in the original Hebrew with a *yod*, which was the manner of spelling it after the captivity. Dr. Kennicott, in his Dissertations, observes, "that the word David, from its first appearance in Ruth, where it is written (דָּוִד) without the *yod*, continues to be so written through the books of Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Zechariah; therefore he suggests, that if it was customary to write this word without a *yod* till the captivity, and with one after it, then he thinks a strong argument may be drawn from hence against the antiquity of the Canticles, and its being the production of Solomon, since this name occurs with a *yod* in Canticles iv. 4." But it is not true that the word is universally used without a *yod* in the books mentioned, particularly the books of Kings; for the authors of the Massorah have observed on 1 Kings iii. 14, that it is five times written *full*, as they call it, *i. e.* with the *yod*. "Three of the places," says Dr. Gill, "I have traced out (1 Kings iii. 14, xi. 4, 36), and have found it so written in all the printed copies I have seen; and so it is read by the Eastern Jews in Ezek. xxxvii. 24, and in several printed editions of Ezek. xxxiv. 23. It is so written once in Hosea, and twice in Amos, books written two hundred years before the captivity."

But, if the objection could not be satisfactorily answered, as the name occurs but once in the whole poem, and the present Hebrew is so full of literal mistakes of this kind, such a circumstance could

not be insisted on, as alone sufficient to disprove the genuineness of the book.

The use of a few Chaldee and Syriac words, or forms of words, in this book, has been made another ground of objection. But this only proves that the author was acquainted with some of the kindred dialects, and sometimes embellished his poetry with foreign ornaments, perhaps chiefly for the sake of the rhythm, or the pronunciation, just as the Greeks intermixed their dialects, which differed nearly as these neighbouring eastern languages. The same kind of argument might be employed against the writings of David and other prophets, as well as against other pieces of Solomon himself.

[Rosenmüller, (*Scholia in Vet. Test.*) although he does not admit Solomon to be the author, yet says, (*in Salomon. Cant. Proœmium*, § iv.) "Nolo quæ Eichhornius aliique temporis post exilium afferunt argumenta, urgere dictiones nonnullas ad Aramaisum vergentes, cujusmodi et in libris V. T. antiquioribus reperiuntur;" and adds, in a note: "Omnino antiquiorum V. T. librorum nullum Chaldaismis carere, ita ut illi soli non valeant ad librum in quo occurrunt seriori ætati adjudicandum. nuper ostendit LUDOV. HIRZEL in Commentat. de Chaldaismi biblici origine et auctoritate critica." Lips. 1830. in quat.]

2. It is objected that the *Canticles* is never quoted by any of the sacred writers.

But the same may be said of many other books of the Old Testament, whose authority was never yet called in question. And although it may not be expressly cited, and the very words transcribed, as is the case with some other parts of Scripture, yet both Old and New Testament writers employ the same figures (as has been already shown), borrow many of the expressions, and allude, it is probable, to many passages contained in it.

3. But it is said, still further, that our Lord himself never makes the least allusion to this book.

To this it may be replied, that our Lord does expressly recognise the threefold division of the Old Testament into the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms, which included all the canonical books, and among the rest the Song of Solomon; for it has been satisfactorily proved, as Dr. Priestley acknowledges, that "there can be no doubt but that the canon of the Old Testament was the same in the time of our Saviour as it is now." And if so, this book was there when our Lord said to the Jews, "Search the Scriptures, for they are they which testify of me,"* and when the apostle Paul said, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and instruction in righteousness."

4. Considerable importance is to be attached to *Josephus's catalogue of the sacred writings*. It has been objected that no mention is here made of the *Song of Solomon*.

* Although this poem is not quoted by our Lord, it is observable that he has on two occasions adopted the same kind of allegory, viz., in the parables of the Ten Virgins, and the Marriage Supper.

The words of Josephus are these: "We have two-and-twenty books which justly claim our belief and confidence. Of these, *five* are the books of Moses, *thirteen* the books of the Prophets, and *four* more contain hymns to God, and admonitions for the correction of human life." Now, by a very natural classification of the twelve minor Prophets into one book; by joining Judges with Ruth; Ezra with Nehemiah; Jeremiah with his Lamentations; and taking the two books of Samuel, the two books of Kings, and the two books of Chronicles, respectively as one book, we have thirteen books for the second division; and have left for the third division *four*, very well agreeing with the description given of them by Josephus, viz., the Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon.

5. *It has been urged also that there is no sufficient ground for an allegorical interpretation of this book.*

An attentive examination will, however, lead us to a different conclusion. There is, in the very nature of things, so great an analogy between natural and spiritual objects, and so great an inability on the part of man to comprehend any thing spiritual, except through the medium of the senses, as furnishes a rational ground for the adoption of the allegory in the sacred Scriptures. This method of representing divine truth, once adopted, may be applied to various subjects, and carried to any reasonable extent. Thus, if we find these metaphorical illustrations sometimes occupying a few sentences, and in such cases, without any hesitation, give them their legitimate spiritual interpretation, why not acknowledge the principle, and adopt the same course in regard to an allegory of a more extended form?

It will be said, perhaps, that the parables and allegories in other parts of Scripture, always carry with them their own key. This, however, is not always the case. The statement of Nathan to David (2 Sam. xii. 1—4) was not even suspected to be a parable. The allegories of Solomon concerning divine wisdom (Prov. viii. ix. &c.) are, on this account, also disputed, so far at least as to their having any reference to the Messiah. But this poem appears evidently intended to be allegorical, being founded upon principles current through both Testaments. If this be not admitted, it appears impossible to account for its introduction into the sacred canon.*

The figures here used, Bishop Lowth considers as belonging to the class *anthropopathy*, or, the application of human passions and affections to the Divine Being. "This figure (he observes) is

* "How far the conjecture may be supported, I will not venture at present to pronounce, but thus much it may be proper to observe," says Mr. Henley (*vide* Note in Gregory's Translation of Lowth's *Prælectiones*, Lect. xxxi. p. 344), "that such images as the *tents of Kedar* compared to the *complexion of a young female*; the *tower of David* to her *neck*; *Tirza* to her *beauty*, and *Jerusalem* to her *comeliness*; the *fish-pools of Heshbon* by the *gates of Bethrabbim* to her *eyes*; the *tower of Lebanon* looking towards *Damascus*, to her *nose*; the *mount of Carmel* to her *head*; with others of a similar kind, would, I think, have never been selected to exemplify the beauties of a BRIDE, in any composition that was not allegorical."

not in the least productive of obscurity, the nature of it is better understood than that of most others; and though it is exhibited in a variety of lights, it constantly preserves its native perspicuity. A peculiar people, of the posterity of Abraham, was selected by God from among the nations, and he ratified his choice by a solemn covenant. This covenant was founded on reciprocal conditions; on the one part, love, protection, and support; on the other, faith, obedience, and worship, pure and devout. This is that conjugal union between God and his Church; that solemn compact so frequently celebrated by almost all the sacred writers under this image. In this form of expression, God is supposed to bear exactly the same relation to the Church, *as a husband to a wife*; God is represented as the spouse of the Church, and the Church as the betrothed of God. Thus also the piety of the people, their impiety, their idolatry, and rejection, stand in the same relation with respect to the sacred covenant, as chastity, modesty, immodesty, adultery, and divorce, with respect to the marriage contract." Instances of this he gives from the prophetic writings, as the following:

"For thy husband is thy Maker,
Jehovah, God of Hosts, is his name."—Isa. liv. 5, 6.
"For as a young man weddeth a virgin,
So shall thy Restorer wed thee.
And as the bridegroom rejoiceth in his bride,
So shall thy God rejoice in thee."—Isa. lxii. 5.

"None of the prophets," he adds, "have applied these images with so much boldness and freedom as Ezekiel, particularly in two parables. (Chap. xvi. xxiii.) If these parables (which are put into the mouth of God himself) be well considered, I am persuaded that the Song of Solomon (which is *in every part chaste and elegant*) will not appear unworthy of the divine sense, in which it is usually taken, either in matter or in style; or, in any degree inferior, either in gravity or purity, to the other remains of the sacred poets."

As an additional authority for interpreting this poem allegorically, we may refer to the 45th psalm. The description of the spouse here, is so strikingly similar to that of Solomon, that there appears little doubt of their being equally allegorical, and of their having a similar signification.

"Kings' daughters are among thy honourable women;
On thy right hand stands the queen in gold of Ophir.
Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear:
Forget also thine own people, and thy father's house:
So shall the King greatly desire thy beauty.
The King's daughter is all glorious within:
Her clothing is of wrought gold.
She shall be brought to the King in raiment of needle-work:
The virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee:
With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought:
They shall enter into the King's palace."

Several passages contained in this psalm demonstrate, that it can refer to no mortal love, but must be allegorically explained. It is expressly applied to King Messiah, by the Chaldee Paraphrast, and by the apostle Paul, and the analogy between this and the Song of

Solomon strongly pleads for a similar spiritual interpretation of that Song

Such has been the opinion of both Jews and Christians in all ages. And "this method of explication," observes Mr Williams, "is perfectly congenial to the eastern taste." Sir John Chardin says of the Persians, that "the most serious of their poets treat of the sublimest mysteries of theology, under the most licentious language in the way of allegory." Sir William Jones, in a very curious essay on "the mystical poetry of the Persians and Hindoos,"* says, "A figurative mode of expressing the fervour of devotion, or the ardent love of created spirits toward their beneficent Creator, has existed from time immemorial in Asia. There exists among the Persians a singular species of poetry, which consists almost wholly of a mystical religious allegory, though it seems on a transient view to contain only the sentiments of a wild and voluptuous libertinism. Now, admitting the danger of a poetical style, in which the limits between vice and enthusiasm are so minute as to be hardly distinguishable, we must allow it to be natural, though a warm imagination may carry it to a culpable excess; for an ardently grateful piety is congenial to the undepraved nature of man, whose mind, sinking under the magnitude of the subject, and struggling to express its emotions, has recourse to metaphors and allegories, which it sometimes extends beyond the bounds of cool reason, and often to the brink of absurdity." The Hindoos have a pastoral drama, called the Song of Jayadéva, the subject of which is the loves of Crishna and Radha, or the reciprocal attraction between the divine goodness and the human soul; the style and imagery of which, like those of the Royal Hebrew bard, are in the highest degree flowery and amatory.

Such a poem as the Canticles is therefore what might be expected from such a writer as Solomon, and to interpret it allegorically is perfectly in the eastern taste, and not at all at variance with other parts of holy writ.

6. *It is alleged, that "the language of this book" (even allegorically understood) "is remote from the deep humility, reverence, and godly fear, which characterize the prayers and praises of true penitents."*

This is indeed the fact; but then it must be remembered, that the Church is not here represented, either in her previous state, or in her subsequent scenes of affliction and widowhood; but in the day of her bridal union—in the day of the gladness of her heart. "The subject thereof," says an old writer, "is not so much concerning the ordinary state of the people of God, nor of the communications of their faith and piety, nor of God's ordinary benefits bestowed upon them, as of the inward effusion of Christ's grace into their hearts, and of the unspeakable comforts of his Spirit with the lifting up of the soul and mind, and of the strong effects of faith in its greatest endeavours, and of the divine love purged from all worldly thoughts and affections."

* Sir William Jones's Works, vol. iv. p. 211.

7. Again, it is objected, that this poem "declares no sacred truths, includes no lessons of faith, obedience, and piety."

But this is a *petitio principii*, evidently proceeding on the assumption that it is *not* an allegory. Admitting the allegory, it is full of important truths; especially does it set forth in glowing colours the excellency and glory of the Saviour, and the beauty of the redeemed Church which he presents to himself "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing."

Having thus stated the arguments on both sides, and given the subject an attentive examination, the writer must, in conclusion, express his conviction (which he would do with some degree of diffidence, aware that men eminent for learning and piety have entertained different sentiments) that we have not sufficient grounds, either for rejecting the Song of Solomon from the canon of Scripture, or for doubting its inspiration; and further, that it appears, when understood in its spiritual sense, to be admirably adapted to excite devout affections in the souls of Christians—to draw out their desires towards God—to increase their delight in him—to improve their acquaintance and communion with him—and to prepare them for their entrance upon the heavenly state, where they shall enjoy the beatific vision of their God and Saviour, behold the unveiled glories of him whom their souls love, and "be glad and rejoice in him" for ever.

B. R.

DR. J. P. SMITH'S REPLIES TO THE REV. MESSRS. WALFORD
AND WILSON, ON 2 TIM. III. 16.

(To the Editor.)

MY DEAR SIR,—My friend, and for many years my academical colleague, the Rev. William Walford, has, in the last number of your valuable miscellany, made some strictures upon the translation of 2 Timothy iii. 16., which conviction had led me to adopt and publish, twenty years ago, in the first edition of my *Scripture Testimony to the Messiah*, and to retain, with further explications, in the two subsequent editions of 1829 and 1837.

To the man who convicts me of error, or assists me in the discovery of truth, or dissipates any mist of prejudice in which I may have been involved, I hold myself to be under no small obligation. Notwithstanding, therefore, the length of time which my judgment has been satisfied upon this question, I have felt it my duty to institute a renewed investigation of it. The result, however, is a stronger confirmation of my previous sentiment. Of this, I shall assign the reasons, as briefly as I may be able.

I. The translation (which has come down to us from the primitive times of Christianity) to which Mr. W. objects, is *REQUIRED by the grammatical construction* of the clause; while that for which he pleads is *CONTRARY to the grammar of the language and the usage of all Greek authors.*

The truth of this position depends upon two facts.

1. The use of *γραφῇ* without the article, or without an equivalent to the insertion of the article. This, in those circumstances, is necessarily *a writing*, in the most general sense. Every attentive and unprejudiced scholar must be aware of this fact. The instances are indeed but few, in the Septuagint and the New Testament, of the word occurring under this condition. If I mistake not, the following are all.

Ezra ii. 62. "These sought their writing," *i. e.* their family register, *ib.* iv. 7. "The collector of tribute wrote a writing."

Dan. x. 21. "However, I will declare to thee that which is written in a genuine writing:" *ἐν γραφῇ ἀληθείας*, an exact rendering of the Hebrew; and the intention, I apprehend is (under the figure of an allusion to the practice of sovereigns in the manner of their decrees,) to signify a notification, by the angel to the prophet, of the purpose of God; as if he had said, *the edict recorded, the true and authoritative declaration of the sovereign will.*

2. Pet. ii. 21. "Every prophecy of writing." The negative particle that follows, according to the Hebraized style of the N. T. produces the sense of a universal negative, or an absolute exclusive; whereas in Latin and English, this form would be a partial affirmative. See Ps. cxix. 133, and many other passages. The overlooking of this idiom has betrayed our translators into an egregious mistake in their version of 1 John ii. 19;— "that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us." This phrase, in the Latin and English idioms, would convey the idea that *some of them*, though *not all*, had been of us: but a true translation would give the clause thus,— "that none of them were of us."—This expression of the apostle Peter *προφητεία γραφῆς*, must evidently be understood according to the Hebrew usage, of perpetual occurrence in the N. T. denoting an attributive (which, in the western languages, would have been expressed by an adjective,) by a subjoined noun in the genitive. Hence, the sense comes out, *written prophecy*. This is indeed the same in effect as our common version, "prophecy of the scripture;" but that is the *deduced* meaning, not the strict construction.

To make this position more clear, I request the reader to examine, in his Greek Testament, all the instances of *γραφῇ* referring to the sacred writings; and he will find that there is always the article, or some other definitive word, *appropriating* the otherwise general term, and *limiting* it to the records of revelation or some portion of them.

A degree of ambiguity and difficulty is produced, to the English reader, by the fact of our having in our language (as in many other instances) two words, the one our native English and the other derived from the Latin; which originally signify alike, but one of which usage has caused to assume a special signification. These are, *writing* and *scripture*. The latter term is by usage confined to the holy and inspired writings. Our translators probably thought they could not err by taking this term in the latter sense, in 2 Tim. iii. 16; because it is self-evident that the intention of the apostle looks to the

sacred books: but thus they have inadvertently deserted the just construction. To me it appears exceedingly probable, that this unsuspected source of fallacy has been the cause of the extensive acquiescence which the common version of this clause has obtained. The French, and the other languages derived from the Latin, do not labour under this disadvantage; yet this very circumstance has led those French and other translators, whose minds were pre-occupied with the *particular interpretation*, to resolve upon supporting it; though, to accomplish that object, they were obliged to *relinquish strict fidelity*, by interpolating the article. Calvin, unhappily had led the way, and he has been followed by most of the French Protestant versions and editions ever since. Hence, we have "Toute écriture [est] divinement inspirée, et utile"—&c. (*Calvin.*) and this was soon improved into "Toute l'écriture—" "Tutta la scrittura [è] divinamente ispirata—" (*Diodati*)—"Omnis scriptura divinitus inspirata, et utilis—" (*Calvin*, in 1555; but in his Commentaries, 1557, instead of *et* he puts *est ac.*) "Tota scriptura divinitus [est] inspirata, et utilis—" (*Beza.*) Castellio, by using *scriptum* instead of *scriptura*, seems to have first had in his mind to follow the ancient method; but perhaps his deep distresses, and his dread of their being aggravated by Beza's ire, drew him aside from the dictate of his own judgment; and he wrote (if no alteration was made in the subsequent reprints, for I have not his original edition,) "Omne scriptum divinitus inspiratum est, et utile—" He has however, a little annotation which goes to verify the reading *scriptum*, and to evince that he substantially held to the interpretation for which I have so long pleaded. "*Omne scriptum, scilicet sacrum; de quibus locutus est: 'Every writing, that is, every sacred writing; every one of those of which the apostle was speaking.'*"—"For the whole scripture [is] given by inspiration of God, and [is] profitable—" (The Geneva English, 1557.)—"For the whole scripture is of God inspired, and is profitable—" (Piscator's German.) "All the writing [*schrift*], we might render it *scripture*, is of God inspired, and is profitable—" (The Dutch of the Synod of Dort.)

On the other hand, we have;—"For all writing [*schrift*] of God inspired is profitable—" (*Luther*, 1524, and in every subsequent edition.)—"For all scripture given by inspiration of God, is profitable to teach, to improve, to inform, and to instruct in righteousness." (The martyr Tyndale; 1526, the first English N.T. translated from the Original Greek. Wycliffe's was from the Latin Vulgate.) "Toda escriptura inspirada divinamente es util—" (*Cyprian Valera*, 1569.)—"Omnis scriptura divinitus inspirata, est utilis—" (*Augustin Marlorat*, of Rouen; martyred in 1572.) This instance is of the more weight, as this faithful servant of Christ was warmly attached to Calvin, and very generally adopts his version.

You must pardon my having been, unintentionally, and I might say imperceptibly, drawn into this digression upon the rendering of *γραφή*, but it will be useful to the illustration of the question before us, and it supplies a probable reason for the extensive prevalence of the construction, which the force of apprehended evidence compels me to view as erroneous.

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ii. The second grammatical fact to be observed, relates to the use of *πᾶς*. It is, that this adjective, without the article, in the singular number, and referring to an object capable of distribution, has the meaning of *ἕκαστος*, *quisque*, *unusquisque*, *every*, *each*. For instance:

Πᾶσα πόλις, *every city*; but to express *all the city*, we must say *πᾶσα ἡ πόλις*.

Πᾶν ἔθνος, *every nation*; *πᾶν τὸ ἔθνος*, *all the nation*, or *the whole nation*.

Πᾶν, *every thing*, taken distributively; *τὸ πᾶν*, *the universe*, taken collectively.

Πᾶσα νόσος καὶ πᾶσα μαλακία, *every acute disease and every chronic ailment*.

So, *ἀνὰ πᾶσαν ἡμέραν* signifies *every day*; but not *the whole day*: *κατὰ πᾶσαν νύκτα*, *every night*, not *all night*.

Πᾶσα δικαιοσύνη (Matt. iii. 15.) is rendered, in our version, "all righteousness." This may at first sight seem to contradict the grammatical principle: but I conceive the fact to be that *δικαιοσύνη* here stands for *τὸ δίκαιον*, *duty*, *what is right and incumbent*; producing the sense,—“For thus it is becoming us to perform every duty.” The same solution will also apply to Acts xiii. 10; “O, thou [wretch,] full of every trick and every crafty management!” There are two other passages (Acts ii. 36, “All the house of Israel;” and Rom. xi. 26, “All Israel;”) which may be thought to be exceptions, but they really are not so in my humble judgment; for they fall under the reason of the omission of the article *before proper names*, which Bishop Middleton has excellently confirmed and illustrated, in his *Doctrine of the Greek Article*, Part I. Chap. iv.

II. The second class of evidence to which I appeal, is that furnished by the *Ancient Versions*.

Every Biblical student is aware of the great importance of those Versions, and that their chief value lies in two things.

1. Assisting in the *determination of readings*, when the manuscript authorities differ. In most cases we can pronounce with almost absolute certainty, what reading the translator had before him, in a manuscript probably, and in some cases *certainly*, much older and nearer to the primitive autograph than any manuscript that has come down to our times.

2. Supplying, in the most unexceptionable manner, an interpretation of *idiomatical clauses*; because the makers of those Versions lived while the language from which they were translating was spoken by millions around them, and often was their own vernacular tongue. They are therefore our best aids in difficulties of this kind. I shall give a close translation of their respective readings.

1. The Peshito* *Syriac*, which, with much probability, may be regarded as having been made in the century immediately following that of the Apostles; and it is not unreasonable to suppose that the manuscripts of the original books, or some of them, were actually

* Signifying *right and just*. The appellation was given in an early period, because of the eminent *fidelity* by which this Version is distinguished.

apostolic autographs or authenticated by apostolic men; or were the first transcripts from such. This most venerable Version presents to us the clause thus:—"For every writing which by the Spirit is written, profitable [is] it for teaching, for reprehending, — &c." I humbly think that nothing can be more clear and decisive than this testimony.

2. Another *Syriac* Version was made by Polycarp the Suffragan of Philoxenus, bishop of Hierapolis in Syria, and therefore called the *Philoxenian*. It carries its express date, the year of the common era, 508; and its character is that of an extreme, anxious, and even servile imitation of the Greek Text. It gives the passage thus; "Every writing inspired by God, also useful [is] it, for teaching, for conviction, — &c."

3. The *Latin*, usually called the Vulgate, formed about 384 or 386, by the cautious diligence of Jerome, upon the basis of more ancient Latin Versions, especially one, to which, following the authority of a passage in Augustine, the title of the *Old Italic* is applied. This has the text, "Omnis scriptura divinitus inspirata, utilis est ad docendum, ad arguendum, —" &c. 'Every writing divinely inspired, is useful for teaching, for reproving, —.' I will copy De Sacy's translation, a man of the most holy and honourable character; who, though he makes the Vulgate his basis, diligent and faithfully kept the Greek before his eyes. "Toute écriture qui est inspirée de Dieu, est utile pour instruire, pour reprendre, pour corriger, et pour conduire à la piété [et] à la justice."

4. The *Coptic* of the Memphitic dialect, which reasonably claims an age at least, as early as between 350 and 400, gives the passage as follows. Of necessity I take it from David Wilkins's Latin; Oxford, 1716. "Omnes scripturæ inspiratæ a Deo sunt utiles ad doctrinam, —" "All writings inspired by God are useful —" &c.

5. The *Æthiopic*, probably about the same age as the Coptic, seems (so far as I can judge from the Latin of Walton,) to follow the Greek closely, but adding the word *Spirit* from the Syriac.

6. The *Arabic* of Walton's Polyglot seems to follow the Syriac. Its age is supposed to be prior to the seventh century.

Of the other Ancient Versions, (which are the Armenian, the Slavonic, the Gothic, and the Georgian,) I am not able to give an account: but the preceding, No. 1 to 5, are the earliest and most important; and therefore these later versions, if they should deviate from the former, which in this case is very improbable, would not have much weight.

III. The use of the Fathers (as the early Christian writers, after the Apostles, are usually called,) is somewhat resembling that of the Ancient Versions; as bringing testimony to readings and to the sense of *idiomatical* phrases.

But I find very little notice taken of this passage by any of them. The earliest is *Tertullian*, the first of the Latin Fathers, who flourished about the year 200. He introduces the passage in a remarkable manner, *inverting* the component terms, for the service of his argument in support of the genuineness and divine authority of the book called *The Prophecy of Enoch*. The whole paragraph must

be copied, otherwise my reader will scarcely understand the reference to 2 Tim. iii. 16. "Sed cum Enoch eadem scriptura etiam de Domino prædicarit, a nobis quidem nihil omnino rejiciendum est, quod pertinet ad nos; et legimus, *Omnem scripturam ædificationi habilem, divinitus inspirari*: a Judæis postea jam videri propterea rejectam, sicut et cætera fere quæ Christum sonant." (*De Habitu Muliebri*, sect. iii.) "But, since Enoch in the same writing prophesied also concerning the Lord, it is by no means to be rejected by us, so far as we [*i. e.* Christians] are concerned; and we read that *Every writing adapted to edification, is divinely inspired*: by the Jews indeed afterwards it appears to have been rejected for the very reason [of its bearing testimony to Christ,] as also they reject such other passages generally as refer to Christ." From this *adaptation* of the passage, by the warm-hearted but not very judicious African Father, it appears impossible to say, with confidence, how *he* (probably according to the Old Italic Version) precisely read it: but I cannot but think his citation evidently more in accordance with the translation for which I plead, than with the other.

Jerome has a small note, but it does not touch upon the construction of the passage; and we may not unreasonably infer that he regarded his version as indubitably the true one, and needing no defence.

Augustine also, the contemporary of Jerome, cites the passage according to Jerome, but without casting any light upon our question, or even indicating that such a question might be raised.

Origen (who died in 255) quotes the passage three or four times, but not so as to warrant any certain inference upon our inquiry. Rufinus (in his versions of the lost works of Origen,) has the text twice or thrice, but always according to Jerome, though he had been so unjustly and implacably harassed by that irritable Father.

Chrysostom (d. 411,) comments upon the passage in a manner which is interesting, yet it does not appear to me to settle our difficulty. After citing it, according to the common text (for, as Mr. Walford has justly observed, there is no variation,) he proceeds:—"*Every* [writing]! What kind? That, saith he, of which I said, *Every sacred* [writing]: that of which he was discoursing; *these things are said* [a scripture formula, Luke iv. 12; Heb. iv. 7.] [The writing] concerning which he said, *That from a child, thou hast known the sacred writings*. Every one, then, that is such [is] divinely inspired. Do not then hesitate, saith he. And is profitable —," &c. (*Homil. ix. in 2 Tim.*)

Theodoret (d. about 460,) in his Commentary, says, "By using a distinction, he [the apostle] sets apart the compositions of human wisdom; but to the spiritual [*i. e.* that which is the production of the Holy Spirit,] he applies the term, *divinely inspired writing*. For the grace of the Divine Spirit uttered its dictates through the prophets and the apostles. It follows that the Holy Spirit is God, since it is certainly true that, according to the apostle, *θεόπνευστος τοῦ Πνεύματος ἡ γραφή*.] the writing [*or* scripture] is divinely inspired of the Spirit." It appears to me that this illustration will suit either mode of construing the passage, and will not therefore

be decisive of the question. But, in another of this author's writings, a very observable paragraph occurs. He has just quoted Acts xxi. 11. as a proof of the personality of the Holy Spirit; and he proceeds, "All these [φωναί] declarations are said to be [θεόπνευστοι] divinely inspired: therefore, —, &c. — the declarations of the Spirit are those of God." The Macedonian objector exclaims, "[Μὴ γένοιτο.] Far be it!" Theodoret replies, "Say then that some [of the φωναί] are divinely inspired, but some are not; and cast blame upon the holy Paul for having written that *all the scriptures are divinely inspired*; [γράφαντι θεόπνεύστους τὰς πάσας γραφάς.]" (*Dial. III. de S. Trin. Sect. 21.*) Here, it is plain that Theodoret maintains the sense of the passage which my worthy opponent supports: but I request it to be observed that, in order to effect this purpose, he takes the liberty of completely altering the words, so as to escape from violating the grammatical construction.

I have not time to pursue this class of testimonies farther; and it is not probable that it would yield us any more information.

IV. I had proposed, under a fourth head, to introduce the mention of modern translators, acknowledged to be of distinguished merit for learning and impartiality, on both sides of our question. But the length to which this paper has extended calls me to desist: and a considerable number of the more recent versions have been cited under section I. I would only add, that one whose name deserves honour equal to that of the greatest and best of the Fathers, RICHARD BAXTER, has plainly shown how he understood the passage, in his *Paraphrase*. "All those writings which are of divine inspiration, are also profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for amendment and correction, and for education and discipline in righteousness; that so all God's servants, and especially teachers, may be complete, and fully instructed and furnished, for every good work, required of [by] God, for the ministerial service, and for man's salvation."

Thus I lay before your readers the reasons which have so long satisfied my mind that the mode of rendering this passage, to which my old friend objects, is *the true and faithful translation*.

1. The grammatical construction requires it.

2. It is sanctioned by the *most ancient translations*, made nearest to the apostolical times, and when the idiomatical peculiarities of the Greek language were in daily use.

3. It has been approved and adopted, in both early and recent times, by many persons *eminently qualified* to form a sound judgment upon the case.

Notwithstanding the unwelcome length of this letter, I beg to offer one or two observations upon what my friend has advanced; but which indeed he himself calls "*hasty remarks*."

1. He strongly animadverts upon the amassing of different opinions, as a perplexing and highly injurious procedure. I have no doubt but that I agree with him upon the pedantic, absurd, and noxious character of such a procedure in general. But there are cases of difficulty, in which a view of the sentiments of persons who were well qualified to form an opinion, is of great utility in obtaining

evidence and satisfaction. As Mr. Walford's remarks are apparently designed to apply to the present instance, I would respectfully remind him that there are *only two* opinions upon the case, and that the citing of different translators and critics in my *Scripture Testimony* was intended and, I humbly think, *is conducive* to remove obscurity and prevent perplexity. I have, with great satisfaction, heard from Mr. Walford's own mouth, the assertion, that no mode of investigating the scriptures is so likely to produce a good result, in the right understanding of difficult passages, as *the comparison of translations*.

2. Mr. Walford says, "Dr. Smith remarks that the construction of this text which he adopts, is agreeable to that which is generally put upon it by Unitarians. For my own part," he continues, "I have not the smallest reluctance to welcome any criticism, be its originators and maintainers who they may, provided it approves itself to my understanding, by its truth and correctness." But, notwithstanding this candid and equitable declaration, Mr. W. reiterates again and again the alarming idea. Perhaps it did not occur to him, that a large number of persons will pay no attention to his declaration; but will readily catch at, and tenaciously hold, the insinuation which seems to be made in the repeated assertions upon presumptive heterodoxy.

3. Mr. Walford conceives that a considerable amount of *internal* evidence accrues to the common version and against the other. "On the interpretation which I impugn," he asks, "what is the discovery that is made? Why; *Every inspired writing is profitable, &c.*—Timothy—must have been more than ordinarily dull, if he was not as satisfied, on this topic, before as after he received the letter in which the passage is contained." Now, I think my friend will, upon reflection, admit that this is rather a dangerous mode of arguing; as investing with too much consequence *our sense* of the greater or less importance of any particular declaration of an inspired writer. It would not be difficult to adduce clauses and verses of scripture, of which some erroneous notion has acquired popularity, from its *seeming more affecting and edifying* than that which a sound Biblical student knows to be the right interpretation. And would not the spirit of this objection apply to many passages that might be pointed out? For example, Prov. xxx. 5. "Every word of God is pure;" Heb. xiii. 17. "That [would be] unprofitable for you;" which, upon the principle thus brought forwards, seems a tame and feeble way of putting the most awful condition of a soul at the great tribunal. But this, though a legitimate mode of solution, is by no means requisite in the present case. It surely will not be supposed that every proposition of a moral fact, which Paul lays before Timothy, is of a nature novel, surprising, or what the young Evangelist had not before adverted to. See 1 ep. iii. 1; and vi. 7.—In our passage, I cannot but think the predicates affirmed to be so high in value, that they are in no way discrepant to the dignity of inspired writings; any more than when the Psalmist says, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." The point of the Apostle's sentiment appears to be a contrast between the best

human instruction and that which comes from God; so that, however valuable and useful in many respects the writings of men may be, they cannot reach the purposes of the Christian ministry, they cannot make "the man of God perfect [*ἀπριος, prompt, ready at a moment's warning,*] and unto every good work thoroughly furnished."

Permit me to return my respectful thanks to Dr. Bennett for his paper in the last Magazine: but I think it better to decline any reply, till after the appearance of his additional observations on the Song of Solomon.

J. PYE SMITH.

Homerton, Jan. 19, 1838.

(To the Editor.)

Homerton, March 14, 1838.

MY DEAR SIR,—Hoping that my letter in reply to the Rev. William Walford, which has been withheld from insertion in the last two numbers of the Congregational Magazine, will be favoured by admission into the ensuing number, I request your reception of this short letter as an appendix to the former. It is in reference to the observations of the Rev. S. Sheridan Wilson, in the Magazine for March, page 165.

1. With great esteem for Mr. Wilson, and respect for his talents and attainments in the Romaic, or Modern Greek language, I cannot admit that those attainments qualify him to judge with correctness and certainty of a question relating to the idiom of the *Ancient Greek*. The characteristics of the modern language appear to me to be poverty, laxity, and clumsiness, in contrast with the richness, the precision, and the beautiful expressiveness of the *Ancient language*. Mr. Wilson's idea of an appeal to the subjects of King Otho, for determining the construction of what is confessedly a difficult clause in an ancient Greek author, rests, I humbly think, on a ground of philological reason similar to this; that, to elucidate an obscurity in Tacitus or either of the Plinys, we should resort to the authority of the present Italians, in their vernacular tongue. Even, I may venture to say that this imagined proceeding would be less preposterous; for the Italian language, in any of its dialects, is far more copious and precise, in comparison with its Latin parent, than is the Romaic with respect to the Greek of purer ages. The degradations of the Lower Empire, and the oppressive rule of the Turks for the last four centuries, seem to have extremely barbarized the vernacular language.

2. If Mr. Wilson were to realize his picture of "standing up among ten thousand Greeks—and exclaiming" (2 Tim. iii. 16;)—the *sense conveyed* would depend upon his *intonation*. By the inflection of his voice he could express either of the two constructions.

3. The Modern Greek Translation of the N. T. confirms the observations made in a part of my former letter, upon the liberty taken by many modern translators in their insertion of a definite

article before γραφή. That translation gives the passage, "Ὁλη ἡ γραφή εἶναι θεόπνευστος καὶ ὠφέλιμος."

4. In each of Mr. Wilson's "two thoughts," which form the concluding part of his paper, he overlooks the difference of meaning effected by the absence and by the presence of the *Article*. Yet this distinction lies at the basis of our discussion.

J. PYE SMITH.

P.S. I think that I forgot, in my former letter, to cite the rendering of the passage in the English Bible commonly called Archbishop Cranmer's. I take it from the last edition, printed before the death of Edward VI. in folio, London, 1553. "All scripture given by inspiration of God, is profitable to teach, to improve, to amend, and to instruct in righteousness."

"LET NOT BRITAIN BE NEGLECTED."

THE holy, joyful solemnities of the May Meetings are again at hand. May these convocations for God's people to advance every work of piety and benevolence, in the present year, exceed in devotion, usefulness, and every mark of the divine presence and approval, those of all former occasions! Admit into your pages, Mr. Editor, if possible, a timely appeal on behalf of our own country, and of the institutions designed to promote the salvation of Britons, the religion of England.

Christian effort for England is most urgently, most imperatively needed. There is awful ignorance and ungodliness to a vast amount and extent in our land. There are multitudes of souls perishing around us. Oh, the vice that abounds in the crowded population of our cities and large towns! Oh, the ignorance that prevails among the scattered population spread over the face of the country! It is not necessary to make exaggerated statements of the ungodliness of our nation; it is not necessary to represent the present age as worse than any that ever preceded; it is not necessary to deny or depreciate the good that has been effected, or the evil that has been prevented by Christian effort in our land during the last forty years. The strictest, the soberest truth of the case, will be quite sufficient to alarm and arouse us, if it can be but once fairly brought before our minds. By what multitudes of Englishmen is the Sabbath desecrated, the gospel utterly neglected! To what a fearful extent is false doctrine preached! What myriads of our countrymen live and die in the belief of a delusive deadly system, which teaches them to trust in a baptismal regeneration and a sacramental viaticum for their soul's eternal welfare! What formidable barriers there are in the way of spreading pure gospel truth through our land! The paralyzing influence of a state religion; the almost universally adverse feelings of all the higher ranks of society; political alienations, inveterate prejudices, the habits, the interests, the torpor of the people!

But it is not for England alone that an appeal is needed. It is for

the British empire in all its parts and dependencies. What shall be said of Ireland? what of our seamen? what of our colonies? What English Christian can look on popish, distracted, benighted, brutalized Ireland, now after the lapse of one hundred and fifty years from the settlement of British liberty, peace and toleration by the glorious revolution of 1688, without shame, and grief, and an aching heart? Is there a spot in the whole world more needing Christian sympathy and energetic enterprise than Ireland?

What English Christian can know and reflect upon the moral state of the British navy, at once our glory and our shame, and call before his mind the hardy, honest, fearless sons of toil, who man our countless ships, abandoned to blasphemy, drunkenness, debauchery, perishing on sea and land by untimely deaths, too often directly caused by their own vices, without exclaiming, 'something must be done—done immediately—done with an energy as yet unknown in our efforts.'

Then our colonies, to which the unfortunate, the enterprising, the guilty, the necessitous of our land, are pouring forth annually by tens of thousands, shall they be neglected? Shall the sons and daughters of Britons be permitted by their Christian countrymen to struggle amidst the toils, and hardships, and privations of commencing colonization uncheered by the presence of the pastor, the sound of the gospel, the rest of the Sabbath? Will they permit the seeds of mighty nations to be planted in rude, but wide and fertile regions; the rudiments of social institutions to be developed in these newly-settled communities, with no infusion of Christian truth, piety, and virtue? Shall our seamen and our colonists be equally a curse instead of a blessing on the earth? the enemies of our missions, and the corrupters of even heathen savages on every shore they visit, in every settlement they plant? Oh! English Christians, your country calls with piercing cry for your compassion and your prayers, your bounty and your efforts!

Christian effort for the British empire has hitherto been most inadequate, and has borne no just proportion to the magnitude and pressing exigencies of the one though varied object.

The object is in itself momentous beyond expression. It is to diminish the ignorance, vice, and ungodliness of this great nation. It is to increase the piety and virtue of the greatest people on earth. It is to save the souls of ungodly Englishmen perishing amidst no common advantages all neglected, with aggravated guilt and ruin.

The object, in its relations and further consequences, rises to a still greater height of interest and moment. By increasing the piety of our nation we increase her qualifications for the high destiny, apparently allotted to her by Providence, to be a blessing to mankind, spreading through the world the gospel. By unchecked increasing ungodliness we may become utterly disqualified for this holy, blessed service; and be therefore broken down, and removed out of the way. By the immense, fearful intermixture of ungodliness in our land—every where—in our legislature, government, commerce, navy, colonies, not to add, professing churches, we are now crippled, enfeebled in all the efforts of British Christians to spread the gospel, to save the souls of men, to improve the condition

of mankind. Let no warm friend to foreign missions feel jealous that increased efforts for home—for Britain, are most earnestly pressed. Every revival of piety in favoured England, every additional British church or British Christian, is an addition to the elements of prayer, and power, and means, all of which are necessary to accomplish, yea, even to attempt his blessed purposes.

The obligation on British Christians to attempt the salvation of their countrymen are peculiar and strong. The various relations of society are doubtless established both to afford facilities and to create obligations for mutual helpfulness. Therefore mankind are not a promiscuous crowd in which none is more connected with one than with another. Every sacred as well as every civil interest of men is to be promoted by the sympathy, affection, and duty which spring out of relation. If for all these purposes the domestic ties are most near and powerful, the national union ought not to be felt but loose and feeble. It should call forth the aspirations of patriotism for our country, the solitudes of nationality for our countrymen of the same soil, and race, and speech, and characteristics. This feeling, sanctified by piety, should both animate and direct our efforts for the salvation of Englishmen. How strong was this feeling in Paul, how tender in Jesus, for their countrymen the Jews! The salvation of a Briton may not be in itself more than that of a Hindoo; but it may be more in the sympathies and interest of a British Christian; and the ruin of the soul thus saved might have been, from greater advantages abused, from greater guilt contracted, far more dreadful than in the other case. Awake, British Christians, to a more solemn recognition of your duties, and to suitable regards for the souls of your countrymen.

Are then new organizations needed to meet the wants of our country, and to open a medium for our efforts on behalf of the ignorant and perishing around us? It is not at all necessary to decide whether any new institution may possibly be required, or might possibly be established with advantage. It is enough to observe, there are many admirable societies already in existence and operation which are as yet most inadequately supported. He who is moved to inquire, what shall I do for the spiritual good of my country, need not be at a loss to find a channel for his liberality or his exertions. Our religious societies, designed to act on the moral and spiritual interests of our nation, want resources, power, extent. British Christians need to be roused to come to their help. A hasty glance at their position and results would at once prove this. Nothing can be worse than querulous, detracting complaints of the times, or of societies, or of devoted men. They spring from a sour, envious mind. They are seldom, in fact, true. They do not promote, but cripple effort; they do not correct, but exasperate real evils. It is, however, perfectly consistent with a due and thankful appreciation of whatever is good, hopeful, encouraging to take a just, impressive view of the inadequacy, the disproportion of all present efforts and appliances to gigantic evils and most threatening emergencies. He is no real friend of our religious societies who is satisfied either with what they are, or with what they effect. Nor,

perhaps, are those formed for the religious benefit of the British empire likely to yield most satisfaction to the thoughtful observer, not because they are not wise and well-adapted instrumentalities, but because they are too feebly sustained and carried on.

1. For England proper, there are, in our crowded cities and towns, Christian Instruction Societies and City Missions; for our rural population, home missions and village preaching operations; for both, schools, distribution of tracts, temperance societies, visitation of the sick, the ignorant, the dying. There seems equally the ingenuity and the activity of benevolence. Societies to meet every evil, operations to reach every class of the necessitous. But how do these various institutions need funds, agents, prayer, power from on high! After all their efforts, the mass of evil on which they are designed to operate, seems undiminished. Their resources and efficiency are to this hour most inadequate. They need to be increased a hundred fold.

2. For Ireland, there is the Irish Evangelical Society. What life, energy, resources are needed by the society that would indeed benefit Ireland; and bring some adequate instrumentality to bear on the ignorance, superstition, vice, and barbarism of that fine land, and noble race of people, at once the victims, the shame, and the scourge of guilty England! Need it be told how pressing are the claims and wants of this society? Where could our money be better bestowed; where our men of consecrated talent and enterprise better employed? Can it be thought that Ireland has an adequate share in our pious solitudes, or this society its fair proportion of our pecuniary contributions?

3. For our seamen, there is the British and Foreign Sailors' Society, than which there is not, of all our religious enterprises, one that attempts an object of deeper interest, or that needs and deserves a larger measure of support and encouragement from the christian public. Do the pious and benevolent of London, of England, really know what is the condition and fate, the life and death of British seamen? Knowing it, can they be unmoved, inactive, apathetic? Are they aware of the existence and efforts of this most excellent society? This is a moving subject. Let the details and appeals of "*Britannia*," by the author of "*Mammon*," be read and pondered. He has a hard heart who does not weep, and tremble, and pray, and give, as the result of a perusal of that book. It is morally impossible that the true state of the case respecting sailors, and the Sailors' Society, should be known without calling forth generous liberality on their behalf.

4. For the colonies, there is the Colonial Missionary Society. It is in its infancy, but it has commenced a great, and important, and necessary work. The spirit of colonization has revived again, after a slumber of ages. Causes are in operation that will necessitate colonization. Immense numbers of emigrant Englishmen, Irish, and Scotch are already located in our colonies. Their numbers will be indefinitely and rapidly augmented. Shall they be suffered to leave a land of ordinances and privileges, to spend and close their lives neglected and destitute of the means of grace? Shall their children

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grow up untaught, vicious, degraded? Shall the social system and institutions of settlements, that may grow and spread into great empires, be commenced in the absence of religion, with all its holy, powerful restraints, and gentle, beneficial influences? Amidst his expatriated countrymen, the English minister of the gospel will receive a cordial welcome. The Sabbath and the house of prayer will cheer the lonely settlement. It is hard to say whether the sons and daughters of ignorance who crowd our streets and cover our country, or those who go to plant themselves on distant shores, the more need our pity and our prayers. Both cry for help. These things must be done, nor must the other be left undone.

These hasty lines, Mr. Editor, have been penned to awaken attention, to more thought, to point out neglected or inadequately performed duties. Our country has the strongest claims on her christian sons. Let her condition be fairly and fully considered. It is fearful and afflictive. Let our duties be impartially estimated. They have been most defectively performed. How great will be the cause of congratulation and hope, if, at the approaching anniversaries in the Metropolis, a marked concern for British objects is manifested; if liberality, prayer, and effort to promote every operation for the spiritual welfare of this great empire shall be seen to abound beyond all previous example.

AN ENGLISHMAN.

SCOTCH AND ENGLISH PRESBYTERIANS.

DEAR SIR,—In the *Christian Observer* for December, 1837, appeared a Review of a large pamphlet, published in the spring of last year, relating to “*Chancery Proceedings of the English Dissenters*,” and entitled “*The Third Act of the Controversy pending in the High Court of Chancery, in the case of The Attorney General v. Shore, being the Proceedings before the Master, to determine the proper parties to be Trustees in the place of those removed.*” In this review were incorporated not only some severe reflections on the parties concerned as relators in the suit, but also heavy, and I must add, unfounded charges against the modern Independents, as a body of persons actuated by base, selfish, and secular motives—“witness, for example, their recent endeavours to obtain the electoral suffrage under false pretences”—“affecting voluntarism as a purely spiritual institution, and yet endeavouring to make it subserve their worldly interests”—“employing dissent upon principle” as a pretext to advance “their pecuniary or political interests,” treating it as an article of merchandize, and “bringing it as a valuable consideration into the money market”—regarding voluntarism as “too good a thing not to be made the most of.” No charge, I apprehend, can be more unjust against “the Dissenters” than that of making a trade of their principles. If nonconformity be not conscientious, persons (generally speaking) act a foolish part in professing it, since their worldly interests would rather be promoted by relinquishing than by retaining those principles, and they would

then cease to incur the odium commonly attached to reputed sectarians and schismatics.

I have observed with regret the altered tone and style adopted towards orthodox Dissenters by the Editor of the *Christian Observer* during the last few years. By the conductors of some other publications we expect to be assailed with slander, misrepresentation, and abuse, and I hope we are prepared to endure, for conscience towards God, any degree of ignominy and scorn, and even to "rejoice that we are counted worthy to suffer shame for His name" who for us not only bore reproach, but also "endured the cross, despising the shame." May our enemies be able to find no fault or occasion against us, except they find it "*concerning the law of our God.*" May we be enabled to follow the example of Him whom we call Teacher and Lord, "who, when he was reviled, reviled not again," and bring no railing accusation against those who speak reproachfully of us, but prove, on the contrary, that we have learned of Him "who was meek and lowly in heart," by "showing out of a good conversation our works with the meekness of that wisdom from above which is peaceable and gentle, as well as pure." Let us be thankful that the power of the sword is no longer in the hands of those who hate, and with the pen and the tongue persecute us, and say all manner of evil against us falsely. But the *Christian Observer* belongs to a different class, and not a few of our body, I believe, have been for several years both readers, and regular purchasers of it. I cannot but deplore that its able Editor should in this instance have allowed himself to descend to calumnious aspersion and indiscriminate censure. I would feign hope that he was betrayed by the impulse of strong feeling to the use of language which, in moments of cool reflection, he regrets, and will not attempt to justify; and I observed with pleasure, that in the first number of the new series, commenced at the beginning of this year, he has assumed a more moderate and conciliatory tone towards those whom he there calls, and whom I trust he will henceforth regard and treat as "*Dissenting brethren.*"

Having taken a lively interest and an active part in the proceedings instituted to recover Lady Hewley's Trust Funds, devoted, as I firmly believe, *exclusively* to Trinitarian and orthodox purposes, out of the hands of those who have for many years past misapplied, (though without corrupt intention,) a considerable portion of them to the advancement of Unitarianism, I wrote some remarks on this article of Review in relation to the claims of certain other parties to the administration of those charity estates. These

* The Letter from the Reverend M. A. Gathercole inserted p. 766, in which an Honourable Member of Parliament is called "a lying fellow," and the Dissenting Ministers "a crew of hardened wretches, interested impostors," &c. is unworthy of notice. The man calling himself a "servant of Christ," possessed by such a spirit as breathes through that letter, is an object of mingled wonder and pity. Surely he knows not "what manner of spirit he is of," or he would not call the meek and gentle Saviour his "beloved Master." I regret that such a letter should have been suffered to defile a page of the *Christian Observer*, even though accompanied by a remonstrance on the part of the Editor against its "dray-horse style, very ill-natured language and coarse invectives."

I forwarded to the Editor, with a request that they might be inserted in the next number of the *Christian Observer*. He returned them with a courteous note, declining compliance with my request, on the sole ground that a communication from my honored friend, Dr. Pye Smith, on the same subject, had been previously received, and was then in the printer's hands. This I considered a satisfactory reason for their non-insertion, and, personally, I have no ground of complaint against the Editor. It was then my intention to digest and arrange some materials already collected, and to lay before the public authentic evidence, in order to prove what, after close and careful examination, appears to me to be an indisputable matter of historical fact,—that the *English 'Presbyterians,' after the Restoration*, were not, as a body, admirers of or advocates for the model and platform of church-government, maintained by the Westminster Assembly of Divines in 1647, adopted and practised (since 1688) by the Church of Scotland, and by the Presbyterian seceders, who have renounced communion with that church since 1734: but that on the contrary, notwithstanding what their leader, Baxter, calls "slight differences," they were, in their views and principles, substantially agreed with the more moderate among the professed Independents, and adopted in practice the Congregational principle, being themselves, in fact, and to all intents and purposes, Congregational, as that word is used in contradistinction from Presbyterian, in the *Scottish* sense of the latter term. I do not therefore hesitate to assert that, in my deliberate judgment, the modern Congregational nonconformists, sprung from a recognised class of *English Dissenters* existing since 1688, holding the same great doctrines, adopting a modified system of church-government and various ecclesiastical usages in accordance with those of the English (so called) Presbyterians at the time when these charities were founded, and with whom their fathers had, some years previously, formed an union—are the legitimate representatives of the body to which it is assumed that the founder belonged, and not parties, some of them descended from a body that did not come into existence till many years after her death, and all of them notoriously and professedly belonging to an entirely different class, viz.—*Scottish Presbyterians*. Other engagements have hitherto hindered me from fulfilling my intention of producing at length the proofs that I have collected, nor is there any probability that I shall find leisure to accomplish this for some months to come. The time fixed for the hearing before the Vice-Chancellor of the Exceptions taken to Lord Henley's report is now approaching, and as I am unwilling to be altogether silent on this question, especially as a conclusion unfavourable to what I consider the cause of truth and justice has been drawn by the writer of the Introduction to the pamphlet referred to at the beginning of this letter, from the circumstance of my having supplied no evidence by affidavit,* may I request you to insert my

* It becomes me to acknowledge the compliment paid to me by this writer as "the person who, by the course of his studies, must be far more competent [than some other parties in the country,] to give authentic information

letter to the Editor of the Christian Observer, with the addition of a few notes and references to authorities.

I am, dear Sir, yours respectfully,

JOSHUA WILSON.

Highbury Place, March 19, 1835.

To the Editor of the Christian Observer.

SIR,—Relying on your own declaration in the number for this month, (p. 776,) that you “would not wilfully do any class of men injustice,” I request the insertion, in your next number, of a few remarks on the article containing that declaration. You say, (p. 773,) “of those who conscientiously differ from us in their views of church-government, we have uniformly abstained from speaking disrespectfully;” but you have certainly failed in fulfilling the intention you announce, “not to deviate on the present occasion from the course hitherto pursued,” and have scarcely abstained from “employing strong language,” as you intimate that the occasion would justify.

I pass without particular notice, your insinuation, (to say the least,) that the relators in a recent Chancery suit concerning Lady Hewley's Trust Estates, are attempting to “make sure” of those estates as “their own,” and “grasping” them as “prey.” You cannot seriously intend to charge them with a rapacious design of appropriating to themselves, and applying to their own use, “property” which *belongs* neither to them nor to their opponents. The sole question to be determined is,—whether English Congregationalists or Scotch Presbyterians, resident in England, are the proper parties to be intrusted by the Court of Chancery with the administration of valuable estates, devoted in perpetuity to religious charitable purposes. Although an effort is required to abstain from noticing these severe censures and acrimonious reflections which you make, in adverting to *other topics*, on Congregational Nonconformists *generally*, the following remarks shall be confined to the question above stated.

You affirm that “the Independent Dissenters, being Congregationalists, have no greater right to the property [trust] than had the Socinian Presbyterians.” p. 779. You can scarcely need to be informed that the “Socinian” Dissenters in England are not, in the sense in which you evidently employ the term, Presbyterians. I cannot but express my surprise that, with the means of accurate information in your hands, or within your reach, you should confound two classes of persons so different, and, in some respects, so dissimilar, as the parties in Scotland and in England, to whom, in common, this term has, since the Restoration, been applied.

You say, (p. 773,) “Lord Lyndhurst, in his judgment of February, 1835, gave it as his opinion that the fact of Lady Hewley's Presbyterianism was a point established beyond all contradiction.” His Lordship's words are, “There can be no doubt that she was, in her religious faith and opinions, a Presbyterian;” and he proceeds to inquire “what were the doctrines and opinions of

on such points;” and I beg to assure the readers of the Congregational Magazine, that I am prepared to produce abundant evidence in proof of the position above stated, which (if life and health are continued,) will certainly be brought before the public, should occasion require.

* Lady Hewley, at the time when she founded these charities, belonged, there is reason to believe, to the class of English Dissenters called Presbyterians, composed chiefly of the descendants and successors of a body to whom that name was applied during the Long Parliament. Placed in very different circumstances and actuated by very different principles, though called by the same name, instead of being strict and zealous maintainers of the divine right of that model of Church government which Scotland had adopted from Geneva, they thankfully accepted at the revolution what they considered the *boon* of toleration,

the Presbyterians of that time;" adducing evidence to show "that they were believers in the Trinity, and in the doctrine of original sin, as contained in the Articles of the Church of England." His Lordship's remarks are confined to matters of *doctrine*. He merely says, in reference to other points of opinion, "The Presbyterians of that day objected only to those Articles of the Established Church that relate to matters of discipline and church-government." His Lordship quotes, as "that which appeared to him decisive upon the subject, the Heads of Argument entered into between the Presbyterians and the Independents, in the year 1691;" and that document contains important matter, bearing on the present question. The following are three of its articles.

"We agree that particular societies of visible saints, who, under Christ their head, are statedly joined together for ordinary communion with one another in all the ordinances of Christ, are *particular churches*, and are to be owned by each other as instituted churches of Christ, though differing in apprehensions and practice in some lesser things.

"That each particular church hath right to choose their own officers; and being furnished with such as are duly qualified and ordained according to the gospel rule, hath authority from Christ for exercising government and enjoying all the ordinances of worship within itself.

"That none of our particular churches shall be *subordinate* to one another, each being endowed with *equality of power* from Jesus Christ. And that none of the said particular churches, their officer or officers, shall exercise any power or have any superiority over any other church, or their officers."*

and though some of them probably might prefer the Scottish Presbytery, the leading men among them had *renounced* the chief and most distinguishing peculiarity of that system;—the government of many separate congregations as one church by classical Presbyteries, provincial synods, and a general assembly—which existed in England for several years before the Restoration, though it was not established by authority of parliament or generally introduced into practice.

The ground on which both sets of new claimants rest their claim to the administration of these charities, is that which will, I believe, be found to prove them disqualified, and to constitute their disqualification. The fact of their being zealous, devoted, and, if the word may be allowed, *thorough-bred* Scotch Presbyterians, is the proof alleged by them of their being the nearest existing representatives of a class of persons who, though they obtained the appellation, were not, in the Scottish sense of the word, true and genuine Presbyterians. They profess to be warmly attached to the leading peculiarities of internal policy, and discipline of the *old* or original Presbyterians in England, and to adhere firmly to the standards and tests of ecclesiastical government, compiled by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, as (*they say*) were also the English Presbyterians at the beginning of the eighteenth century; whereas the Independents "do not recognize those standards and tests, hold no Presbyterian courts for Church discipline or government, but are a class or denomination of religionists who differ essentially from the [Scottish and *old* English] Presbyterians." On this ground they rest the validity of their claims,—on this ground the opposing parties have joined issue, and on this ground therefore the question must now be tried, and the decision awarded. I am quite content to abide by the result, *if truth* may only be allowed to hold the balance of even-handed justice, and to guide the decree of equity.

* The great fundamental principle of congregationalism, that every separate congregation has the right of self-government is here distinctly avowed in most explicit terms. Messrs. Bogue and Bennett thus describe the distinction between Independents and Presbyterians: "This communion (the Independents) is distinguished, by maintaining that every *distinct society* of Christians, assembling together for religious fellowship and worship, is, according to the Scriptures, a church possessed of full powers to regulate its own concerns, and independent of all foreign controul. Presbyterians plead for what may be

You state that "the [Scottish] Presbyterian petitioners declared their unqualified assent to the Presbyterian form of church-government of the West-

called a *representative* church, consisting of the elders, or delegates, of several congregations convened together for the exercise of ecclesiastical discipline. To this Independents object." History of Dissenters, 2d ed. vol. ii. pp. 165, 167.

The article (vi.) "of Occasional Meetings of Ministers, &c." is consistent with this view. They are to be called "in weighty and difficult cases, in order to concord, to *consult and advise*, and their judgment is to be treated with reverential regard by particular churches," but not with implicit submission. Dr. Owen and his congregational brethren were in favour of *such* synods. On this point *habemus confidentem rem*. The Scotch-kirk claimants distinctly avow, in support of their claim, that "the old English Presbyterians, in opposition to Independents, deemed the jurisdiction of Presbyterian Synods and Assemblies *authoritative*, and not merely for advice or consultation," Third Act, p. 416; whereas here (to quote the words of Dr. Toulmin) "the prerogatives exercised, in former days, in synods and assemblies are brought down to occasional meetings of ministers," &c. Historical View of the State of the Protestant Dissenters, p. 103.

These claimants have the modesty to submit to the court that this Agreement "affords evidence that the Presbyterians had not in the slightest degree departed from their principles, and is evidently framed with great care and caution for the purpose of *leaving untouched* the topics in dispute between the two parties, and only setting forth fully and explicitly those points for which the Presbyterians always contended." p. 33. They attempt to evade the plain obvious meaning of the words of the article, beginning, "None of our particular churches shall be subordinate to one another;" and even venture to assert that it "does not set forth any doctrine respecting Church government," p. 34. The Secession Church claimants are not less bold and dogmatical in their assertions and denials concerning this Agreement. It was not, according to them, "an attempt to compromise great and essential differences in reference to Church government then existing between the two sects of Dissenters called Presbyterians and Independents." The Independents were so tenacious of their peculiar views, "and to such an extent did the jealousy between these rival denominations then prevail, that they believe Lady Hewley would have rather left the management of her valuable property in the hands of Episcopalian than in the hands of Independent trustees." What then was the meaning and design of this "attempt"? "To declare a union of these two Dissenting bodies in certain fundamental articles of *faith*; some heads of agreement respecting *doctrinal* subjects were drawn up!" pp. 7, 8. Now let us hear Dr. Toulmin, who may be regarded as an impartial witness on this question: "The enumeration of the topics on which these heads of agreement turned, shews that the assent related *only* to matters of Church government and ecclesiastical discipline and order. . . . In this scheme of union, the united brethren studied by mutual concessions to compromise the differences between them. *Both* departed from the principles of their first institutions, [by the assent given (on the part of the Presbyterians) to section 6 of article i.] "Each particular church hath right, &c., [and (on the part of the Independents) to sect. 7, as follows:] "In the administration of Church power, it belongs to the pastors and other elders of every particular church, if such there be, to rule and govern; and to the brotherhood to consent according to the rule of the gospel."

This no doubt was a concession of a principle that had been contended for by the Brownists, and earlier rigid Independents; but it was itself a principle that had been previously conceded by Robinson, Jacob, and the more moderate race of congregational divines who succeeded them. If, as the kirk-claimants assert, this was "one of the fundamental principles of Presbytery," p. 33, it was one which professed Independents had already avowed; but the point was not an *essential* point of distinction, as Dr. Smith, in his letter to the Editor of the Christian Observer, has shewn, No. I. New Series, p. 14.

minster assembly, which they strenuously contended they held in common with the old Presbyterians of the days of Lady Hewley," p. 773. By "Lady Hewley's days" must obviously, for the purposes of this inquiry, be understood the latter portion of her life, as the trusts were founded in 1704 and 1707. She died at a very advanced age, in 1710. The clauses quoted from the Heads of Agreement amount, I submit, to a formal abandonment of the Scottish Presbyterian government by *classical* Presbyteries, provincial Synods, and general Assemblies. Instead of declaring their unqualified assent to it, the English Presbyterians, of 1691, in a public document deliberately composed and solemnly ratified on a very interesting occasion, declared that they had adopted, and intended thenceforth to act, in the administration of government in the churches over which they presided, upon the *Congregational* principle; explicitly disavowing that *subordination* of individual churches to the authoritative controul of the officers of associated churches, which is the peculiar and distinguishing characteristic of Scottish Presbyterianism.

The Agreement, though originally formed among the *London* ministers, and interrupted *there* for a short period by some *doctrinal* disputes which arose in a

The Secession claimants wisely decline to grapple with particular clauses in the Heads of Agreement; they venture only upon general allegations. First they attempt to get rid of it altogether, as scarcely worthy of notice; they admit that a union did take place, "but it was *hollow* and *partial*, even in London." The former of these statements is unsupported by a shadow of evidence, and as a general assertion is notoriously contrary to fact; and in proof of the latter, they quote passages from Dr. Calamy, who says, that out of six ministers who signed a certain paper, *several* (viz. of these six individuals) had not concurred in the union; and that of the four *new* lecturers chosen at Pinner's Hall to fill up the vacancies produced by withdrawals, "*three* were never of the union." At most therefore, their authorities only prove that four or five did not join, and all these were congregational; yet they say, "it may hence be concluded, that the union was never adhered to by a considerable portion of the ministers;" whereas no evidence can be produced that it did not include *all* the Presbyterian ministers. Certainly "the heads of agreement were signed," or at least formally approved by more than "the leading ministers of the two denominations in and about London;" for we are expressly told, that when printed (1691) "they had been already assented to by above fourscore."

—But then "the terms of union were so *vague* as to permit both parties to continue to practise their respective forms of church government and discipline;" and in confirmation of this we have an *admission* of the relators, "that the ministers of both denominations co-operated without any hesitation or compromise of principle!" How was this possible, if essential differences existed between them, the 'Presbyterians' having previously *practised* the Scottish system of Presbyterianism to which Independents were from conviction opposed? They had before told us that the union "consisted of such discordant elements," that it could not become permanent, pp. 103, 104. They afterwards declare, "that it has been unanswerably proved (by the affidavit of other parties) that the Independents virtually renounced *all* their *peculiarities* and became Presbyterians!" p. 157. Such contradictory and mutually repugnant assertions require no refutation. They sufficiently refute each other.

That the union extended to various parts of the country, I have elsewhere proved Hist. Inquiry, (pp. 65-73, 119-127.), and although these claimants have "the boldness to affirm" that it was *completely* dissolved in 1694, nay, have the *hardihood* (I use their own word) to assert that this "is acknowledged on all hands;" I challenge them to produce a tittle of evidence to show that the union formed in *Yorkshire*, and "assented unto by the brethren of both persuasions" in 1691, (Hist. Inq. p. 123) did not continue till long after Lady Hewley's death. The disputes among the United Ministers which gave occasion to the rupture in *London*, were entirely confined to matters of *doctrine*, and did not extend into the country.

few years among them, rapidly extended through the country, and took permanent effect in various counties, particularly in Yorkshire, Lady Hewley's own county. No attempt was subsequently made to introduce the Scottish Presbyterianism into England till many years after her death, nor was any desire manifested by the English "Presbyterians" to resume the system thus formally abandoned. They were, as compared with the Scottish Presbyterians, real, and even professed, Congregationalists. The term 'Presbyterian,' when applied to them in the Scottish sense, is a gross misnomer. Modern Scotch Presbyterians, in the English northern counties, belong to a different class, who hold and practice the Scotch Presbyterian principles. The new claimants found their claim on the fact of their belonging to *that* class; they assert a right to the administration of these trusts on the ground of being firmly and zealously attached to the peculiarities of the Scottish system. For that very reason I am prepared to maintain that they are *not* (as you call them) "real representatives of Lady Hewley's Presbyterian principles," (p. 773,) those principles being nominally Presbyterian, but really and in fact Congregational.

It will now, I trust, be admitted by candid readers, that the term "Presbyterians," as employed at the time when these trusts were founded, to denote a particular class of English Nonconformists, is capable of being, at least, "honestly," (to use your own term,) or to adopt the language of an excellent minister, whom you mention, "in a fair, just, and honourable sense, applied to the generality of English Congregationalists." What you call "independency," is not, I assure you, Sir, "a pure democracy;" modern Congregational Nonconformists are not opposed to "order and discipline." Neither can they be justly charged with "theological latitudinarianism," although they "zealously proclaim their antipathy to [what you erroneously call] the old Presbyterian doctrine of subscription." p. 776. They adopt precisely the same custom as was universally practised among the English "Presbyterians" of Lady Hewley's time; requiring candidates for ordination to deliver a public confession of their faith, previously composed by themselves, not to subscribe or declare assent to any fixed and invariable formula of doctrine,—a practice adopted by the Scottish Presbyterians, but strongly objected to by an eminent and leading English 'Presbyterian' divine, contemporary with Lady Hewley, as an unwarrantable "imposition," inconsistent with "that true freedom of thought, under the conduct of the Scripture, which the Dissenters stand up for as the privilege of every man." In reference to "the fundamental question of orthodox securities," the modern Congregationalists stand upon precisely the same ground as that occupied by the English 'Presbyterians' of Lady Hewley's time; while the modern Scottish Presbyterians, who demand from candidates for the ministerial office *subscription* to the Westminster Confession, by so doing violate one of the great principles held sacred by the body which they pretend to represent.*

* Dr. J. R. Brown, of the Scotch kirk, asserts that the Presbyterians of Lady Hewley's day did, as the body to which he belongs do, strenuously contend *against* the opinion of modern Congregationalists, who "protest against subscription to any human formularies as a term of communion," or a test of orthodoxy. I might, with literal truth, affirm—*cujus contrarium est verum*, for the real fact was, that they strenuously contended *for* this, which Dr. Brown describes as one of "the extreme opinions of Independents"—"repudiating *subscription* to creeds or confessions of faith, by whomsoever drawn up," p. 150, and *against* the opinion and practice of both sets of new claimants, who require candidates for the ministry, previously to ordination, to subscribe the documents compiled by the Westminster Assembly. Modern Congregationalists do, however, as did the Presbyterians of Lady Hewley's time, require parties on these occasions to "make an open, full, explicit confession of the orthodox doctrines" *in their own words*. While they reject *subscriptions* to articles or confessions of faith, they are not justly liable to the "grave charge of refusing to give satisfactory evidence of soundness in the faith."—p. 166. They invariably require, both

I forbear to enter upon any defence of the orthodoxy of Congregational Dissenters, as you "explicitly state" that you do not concur in the charge made by the Scottish Presbyterian claimants against "many of their ministers, of entertaining heretical opinions upon the doctrine of the Holy Trinity." p. 776. I may, however, be permitted to express my firm conviction, founded on extensive personal knowledge, that none of them are justly obnoxious to the accusation proved by legal evidence to the satisfaction of the Court of Chancery, against the late Trustees of "not holding the doctrinal sentiments of the venerable foundress," or of the body of christian professors to which she belonged.

I trust enough has been said to convince readers of the Christian Observer, and may I not add the Editor himself, that the relators and the body to which they belong have been unjustly accused, and that no sufficient reason has been shown for "employing strong language" concerning their conduct in reference to this important charity.

Highbury Place, Dec. 14th, 1837.

I am, Sir, your's respectfully,

JOSHUA WILSON.

A SHORT DIALOGUE ON BAPTISM.

(To the Editor.)

SIR,—I lately took my daughter to see two dear youths immersed by a good brother of the anti-pædo-baptist church. In returning home, we interchanged a few thoughts, to which, if of any use, you are perfectly welcome.

Daughter. "In this mode of baptizing, there is nothing bad, papa?"

Father. "No, my dear: baptize means simply to wet,—to wet any way."

D. "Does it not always mean that what is wetted must be plunged?"

F. "When the Greek ladies give their eyes a languishing, soft blackness, with their βαφα, or die, how do they do it?"

previously to admission into their colleges, and previously to ordination, that candidates express in their own phraseology, "the sense in which they understand the scriptures upon those doctrines by which they are distinguished from others," particularly Pelagians and Unitarians, and solemnly declare and openly profess their own firm belief in them. The Secession claimants betray great ignorance of a notorious historical fact, as well as great neglect of chronological accuracy, when they say that "it was not till the year 1719 that the Presbyterians of Lady Hewley's time declared against subscription," p. 170. The Presbyterians never, as English Dissenters, "maintained subscription to the Westminster Confession," and Dr. Daniel Williams (the minister above referred to), speaking in their name, in 1712, only two years after the death of Lady Hewley, strongly protests against "cramping men's minds by requiring them to subscribe any imposed form," and represents their "custom" as different and even opposite; the principle for which they contended, being not what the Secession claimants call "the great principle of subscription to human creeds and articles of faith, as the only safe barrier against heretical opinions upon the fundamental doctrines of the gospel." (p. 150.); but what they regarded as "much more reasonable and just, that every one should have the liberty of delivering his own sense of the doctrines of the Scripture in his own words:"—the very principle for which modern Congregationalists contend, and for maintaining which they are branded by these new claimants—rigid sticklers themselves, by their own confession, for punctilious and precisely verbal adherence to human creeds and formularies, as advocates for latitudinarian license." See Hist. Inq. p. 214.

D. "I never saw the Greek ladies at their toilet: at least I never saw them stain their eyes."

F. "They do not *dip* their eyes—they apply the colour with a bodkin, passing it beneath the eye-lashes. Yet it is called a *baphe*, from the same root whence comes the term *baptism*."

D. But the Baptists have scripture on their side: Acts viii. 38, 39. says, "They went down *into* the water, and they came up *out of* the water."

F. "My dear, I expected this when I took you. Stay till we get home; you shall then read me the Greek Testament, and see what it says."

This she did, and our dialogue went on.

D. "I see the words translated *into* and *out of* are *εις* and *εκ*."

F. "Very good, my dear. Now we have lived long among the Greeks, and ought to know what those words mean."

D. "I think *εις* means—but let me see,—*εις την φωριαν* signifies *to the fire, or into the fire, either of these*."

F. "If I say to my Greek servant boy, 'Here, Leonidas, take this jar, and away *to* the river for water,' I use the same word *εις*. Now, what does Leonidas do?"

D. "He goes *to* the river, not *into* it."

F. "Just so, and lets down the jar, without so much as wetting his feet. Yet, I ordered him to go *εις τον ποταμον*, and according to our water-loving Baptist brethren, Leonidas ought to go *in*, and over head too."

D. "But how does Leonidas know that he is not to go *into* the river? for *εις* often means *into*."

F. "The boy knows very well that *εις* now, as when the eunuch was baptized, denotes motion *to* a place, without specifying *how far*; as *εν* denotes motion *from* a place, with the same indefinite import. So that, whether it is to mean *in* or *into*, *out* or *out of*, depends on the connexion, or on conventional usage."

D. "Then what is the proper translation of Acts viii. 38, 39?"

F. "They went down *to* the water, and came up *from* it. *How far*, the text cannot determine; nor does it prove they even wet their feet any more than when Leonidas goes *to* the river for a jar of water."

D. "To immerse, then, is wrong?"

F. "I say no such thing, my dear. Baptizo, or Baptize, means to wet. If you wish to wet a cravat, you can do so either by applying the thing to the water, or the water to the thing. Some believers do one, some the other. I prefer the latter, as scriptural, as ancient, and for other very sufficient reasons."

I think, dear Sir, the above formed the substance and spirit of our little dialogue; and should you think it worth printing, it may do good to our esteemed Baptist brethren. Their noble refusal to imitate *any* thing from the papal pale, I most cordially approve; but to think they are becoming less tenacious of a mere external rite, affords a high gratification to yours truly,

S. S. WILSON.

Goswell Terrace, March 8, 1838.

REVIEW.

THE PROPHETICAL SCHOOL.

- Art. 1. *Things hoped for: or, the Doctrine of the Second Advent, as embodied in the Standards of the Church of England. By Viscount Mandeville, M. P.*
2. *Elements of Prophetical Interpretation. By the Rev. J. W. Brooks.*
3. *A practical Guide to the Prophecies, with Reference to their Interpretation and Fulfilment, and to personal Edification. By the Rev. Ed. Bichersteth. 5th Edition.*

THE extraordinary profusion and confusion of works on unfulfilled prophecy which the present age has witnessed, is certainly one of the signs of the times, though no sign of the march of intellect, or the march of sound scriptural knowledge. Whatever other march it may seem to indicate, our readers shall judge for themselves. There are periodical paroxysms of religious extravagance, or theological fanaticism, which occur about twice in a century, and generally commence with the revival of the old doctrine of the personal advent vamped up afresh, under pretence of some new discoveries, or resuscitation of old ones, and always connected more or less with the profession of miraculous endowments, the spirit of prophecy, or the gift of tongues. The present mania began with the Scotch tongues, ripened into Irvingism, and has moderated in the calmer atmosphere of the Church of England into comparatively harmless speculations upon the personal advent, the millennium, and the restoration of the Jews. With all becoming respect for the understandings, and all affectionate admiration for the piety of our modern *illuminati*, we can neither subscribe to their particular expositions, nor assent to their canons of interpretation.

Before we advert, however, to their various irreconcilable theories, it behoves us to notice a sort of sweeping charge in which nearly the whole body of orthodox dissenting divines are included—a charge made generally by the prophetical writers of the episcopalian school, and very pointedly by Mr. Brooks. It is in substance this—that the question of the personal reign and temporal kingdom of Christ, which, as they allege, was advocated in the early days of nonconformity, almost exclusively by writers of that class, has now been abandoned by their successors, and left, with but few exceptions, to the advocacy of evangelical clergy. It seems to mortify our worthy friends not a little, that they should not be seconded in their speculations by the divines of the different dissenting communions. The fact is so, in the main. The Dissenters have been rather shy of the

subject. No doubt they feel that they have good reasons: but whether these are to be found in more useful occupations, better knowledge, or ignorant indifference, is a question open to conjecture. The reason Mr. Brooks assigns is, we conceive, not quite correct, and certainly not very charitable. He says, "that the Dissenters, who were formerly the *conservation* of the doctrine, are now almost universally either opposed, or entirely indifferent."—p. 105.

Again: when stating the different views which are taken of the Book of Daniel and the Apocalypse, and having alluded to the entirely spiritual sense in which some understand them, he singles out the view of one class, that "may not be passed over, viz. that of the *republican Dissenters* of the present age."—"It is greatly to be feared, that many who exultingly take this view, (observe—the *spiritual view*,) have insensibly imbibed some of the more specious of infidel principles, derived from their communion with Socinians; for a little leaven leavens the whole lump."—p. 321.

Mr. Brooks names Dr. Towers, Mr. Clarke, Mr. Vint, and Mr. Jones, as the principal writers of this school; but the extracts he presents afford no proof that the writers were either Socinians or *republicans*. It is evident, that upon this point Mr. B. has suffered his aristocratical prejudices and tory politics to betray him into an accusation which he has not been able to substantiate. We can tell him, that the republican dissenters are about as rarely to be met with as their political antipodes—the tory dissenters. The body, with some few exceptions standing at the opposite extremes, are as loyal and constitutional patriots as any in her Majesty's dominions. But the whole of the above extracts savour so strongly of the *Record* newspaper, that Mr. Brooks must permit us, for charity's sake, to attribute his statements rather to his implicit faith in that mendacious journal, than to any knowledge or independent judgment of his own. At the same time, however, he must excuse us if we avail ourselves of the present opportunity—first, courteously to contradict his entire statement, and next to offer a hint or two for his information. He cannot be well informed of the state of things among us, or he would not have come forward as an accuser of the brethren; and if the source of his information is as we suspect, then its malignity and its falseness render no further explanation necessary. He may establish it as a rule, that where there is a wish to *record* nothing but evil, the chances will be always in favour of falsehood; and even the truth itself, if it cannot be kept out, will be made to tell lies. Such is precisely the case with this *Magnus Apollo* of the political Evangelical Churchmen. If they believe *anything*—literally *anything*—it says of the orthodox Dissenters, they may expect to be laughed at for their simplicity, and if they reassert it, contradicted for their pains. The wolf and the hawk, the favourite sacrifices of Apollo, would be the appropriate emblems of this Delphic oracle of our pious clergy: and what Apollo did to Marsyas would fitly represent the conduct of the *Record* whenever it notices the Dissenters. *Flay them alive* should stand at the head and tail of every paragraph devoted to that hated race.

But to return to Mr. Brooks and his insinuations, for we must

treat them as his own, since he has favoured us with no authorities. We beg leave to say, the orthodox Dissenters have *no communion* with Socinians. We go further, and affirm, that in the religious sense of that term, the sense in which Mr. B. uses it, or intends it to be understood, the orthodox Dissenters of the present day never had any communion with Socinians. And from whatever quarter Mr. B. has gathered the calumny, we take the liberty to say it is utterly false. But were it as unquestionable a fact, as it is unequivocally a falsehood, a clergyman of the Church of England should have been the last man to cast it reproachfully in our teeth: since he has no escape from the overwhelming retort—*physician heal thyself*. Here, at least, he ought to have withheld the censure, since if he believed it to be true, and a just ground of reproach, he might have perceived that his own party were sunk far deeper in the same condemnation. They do strictly and ecclesiastically hold communion with such. They have them, and know that they have them in their high places. There are many such throughout the land, ministering in that most apostolical and pure church, from one of whose fondest and most devoted sons proceeds the public, sanctimonious slander against the Dissenters in general, that they hold communion with Socinians; and yet there is not known to be an instance throughout the kingdom of a Socinian minister presiding in any of their churches, nor any semblance of a fraternizing with them chargeable upon the orthodox. The connexion that did exist formerly was in no sense a communion, but exclusively related to their common rights as men, and the defence of their natural liberties. Any further association, such as that which has existed solely for benevolent purposes, has never implicated the orthodox bodies of Dissenters, but has simply concerned the individuals so co-operating, and these a very inconsiderable number. The Dissenters throughout the kingdom never felt that their character for orthodoxy was compromised by a few of their brethren in the metropolis meeting to perform acts of benevolence with men of heterodox opinions, any more than Mr. Brooks would feel his character compromised by Mr. Bickersteth's preaching for a hospital or a charity school for which a heterodox clergyman, or a Socinian bishop, might have preached the year before. But Mr. Brooks might have known, that even these trivial associations have been dissolved; and the orthodox Dissenters are now absolutely immaculate, in comparison with their accusers, who still hold church communion with the hated race of Socinians. So easy it is to perceive, or think we perceive, a mote in our brother's eye, while a beam is in our own.

Our keen reprover, Mr. Brooks, assigns for our apparent indifference, or opposition, to the modern theories concerning the personal advent, the "*infidel principles* derived from our communion with Socinians; for a little leaven, (that is of Socinianism,) has leavened the whole lump." But we have avowed, and can prove that no such communion exists. Mr. Brooks's explanation therefore is unfounded. He has been betrayed by his prejudices into a hasty and uncharitable conclusion. He cannot sustain by fact or argument what he has alleged—that the leaven of Socinianism has leavened the whole

lump. It is a calumny which he is challenged either to substantiate or retract. He infers, that, because dissenting ministers do not publish many works upon the subject of unfulfilled prophecy, therefore they have imbibed infidel principles, and have become indifferent to the subject. But surely their silence might be attributed to a better motive, and such a one ought to have been sought, especially in the absence of all proof, either of infidelity or Socinianism. Their zeal and their writings against both these might have protected them from any such calumny. If any class has the merit of being foremost to oppose both these evils, it is the Dissenters. If our reprover had examined more carefully, he might have ascertained that the reason of our silence upon prophecy is neither Socinianism nor infidelity, for those points we are entitled to stand, and we shall insist upon standing unimpeachable; but too great a reverence for prophecy, too deep a sense of the inscrutable character of its emblems, and too great a dread of misleading the Christian Church by crude speculations or mere conjectures, the uniform result of which has hitherto been utter confusion and disappointment, sometimes terminating in infidelity, and generally affording to the infidel an occasion of scorn and triumph. We can assure our accusers, that we will yield to none of them in zeal for the honour of the pure word of God, though for their expositions of unfulfilled prophecy we hesitate to profess a similar reverence, and shall never be persuaded to pawn our faith. We will cheerfully express our confidence, that every jot and tittle of the prophetic word shall be accomplished. But whether any of our prophetic friends have been able to anticipate its accomplishment, or whether it is intended that any of us should do so, are questions in which the integrity of our faith is in no degree implicated. Our friends have done us wrong, they have sinned against the principles of our common Christianity, in wishing and endeavouring to impeach our faith upon such grounds. We beg to ask them, whether they really dare to press upon us the charge of infidelity, because we disbelieve their speculations and interpretations? If so, we retort upon them the charge of assuming a popish infallibility. We can believe the divine word, without feeling the force of any obligation to believe their expositions. Who are these Protestants, that wish to make their own questionable and fluctuating dogmas upon the future events of Providence the rule of their brethren's faith? Who art thou that judgest another? Why should the doctrine of the personal advent be set up as a criterion of faith? Why may not those who look for no personal appearance of the Saviour prior to the final consummation, be as sound and faithful believers as yourselves? Why may not a daily expectation of our great Master's coming to reckon with us, and to call us away from our stewardship, have as salutary an effect upon our feelings and our practice, and rouse us as effectually to watchfulness, diligence, and devotion, as the very questionable notion of his personal appearance and residence upon the earth during our lifetime? We may even go a step further in rebutting the charge of indifference, and assure our misjudging brethren that we will yield to none of them in a devout anxiety to know the mind of the Spirit as to the unfulfilled delineations of prophecy.

But yet we can neither see that their theories afford us any certain help in attaining this object; nor can we admit that our faith is compromised by holding all those theories in abeyance, till we gain a more satisfactory clue to the solution of the mystery which yet envelops the future. Enough light has been thrown upon the prophetic page to satisfy us of the inspiration of the whole; but enough obscurity yet remains to convince us of our utter inability to decypher minutely what is yet unfulfilled. If we needed any additional proof of this, we could readily find it in the utter confusion and contradiction of those who have undertaken to show the church the things that are coming to pass. It is literally true here, *tot homines tot sententia*. Our brethren of the prophetical school boast of the importance of their studies, and would allure us to their views by assuring us of their practical results. These they magnify beyond all reason. We beg to ask them what motives to practical godliness, to personal holiness, to christian zeal or missionary effort they can find in their notion of a coming temporal kingdom which we cannot deduce from the doctrine of a strictly spiritual kingdom, or which they did not themselves find and feel when they entertained the same view of a spiritual millennium, and before they embraced their present view of the descent of the Saviour to accept the empire of Judea, and the elevation of his saints to temporal states and secular glory? We cannot perceive that their new opinions have either enlarged their zeal, improved their feelings towards their christian brethren, or infused into them a more apostolic spirit. On the contrary, many of them have drawn off from co-operation with their fellow-believers, have ceased to sympathize in the grand efforts making to evangelize the world, and have depreciated the means and the instrumentality which God has entrusted to the use of the church. We say not this of all. But we do say, that in the main these speculations have embittered the spirit, cooled the zeal, and unnerved the arm of many who once stood forward in the cause of Christ, ready to co-operate with their brethren in works of faith and labours of love. Yet we are all equally with themselves looking for an entire triumph to be given to the gospel, looking for the coming of our Lord in his kingdom established in the heart, looking for the outpouring of his Spirit upon all flesh, though not for the political power of the saints, nor the assumption of temporal dominion by Christ. We are equally with themselves convinced of the duty of daily watchfulness and daily prayer for the accomplishment of the predicted extension and glory of the church: and we do think that we have one advantage over them—our object is simple, sublime, and stimulating even beyond theirs. We can make our views and expectations bear directly and most efficiently upon the evangelization of the world. We can view ourselves and the whole body of the faithful as workers together with God in bringing about the desired consummation; while their millennium can neither be accelerated nor retarded by any thing they can either do or omit to do. Its approximation is evidently unconnected with the expectation of it by the church; otherwise it must have transpired when, upon their own showing, that expectation had become in the age succeed-

ing the apostolic, quite confident and all but universal. Moreover, their views are vitiated in our esteem by the secular bearings which uniformly induce them to sympathize far too deeply in politics, and in that class of politics which violates many of the first principles of christianity, and tends to keep the free spirit and liberal principles of the gospel in alliance with the beggarly elements of this world. They cannot bear to think of christianity utterly emancipated from all politics. They must always identify its spirit and its movements with toryism and civil establishments, and the divine right of monarchy. These worthy men are angry with the dissenters generally, because they cannot perceive in the mystic visions of prophecy that the religion of Christ is to be always allied to conservation, and to be in a state of dependence upon kings and courts. The very idea of the friends of christianity being enemies to corrupt government or patrons of human liberty and social improvement horrifies them. The expectation that the religion of Jesus Christ should achieve its universal triumph in a state of independence, and without any interference from officers of state, is with them as the sin of witchcraft. We are not quite sure that they would not prefer to see things remain just as they are, as they have, alas, so long been, under the fostering care of the kings and queens of Christendom, rather than see christianity shake off its incumbrances, and be left entirely to the support of its real friends. It is even doubtful whether a bishop could be rightly made, if the royal mandate did not issue. Our worthy and excellent friend, Mr. Bickersteth, has inserted a long and drivelling complaint against the christianity of the nation for wishing to enfranchise the Jews, because it is a forfeiture of our national faith, and an evident attempt to counteract the divine judgments which have been so long upon them. The root of all this narrow-mindedness is easily discoverable—first, in the mistake that a nation's piety in the sight of God depends upon having a particular form of christianity established to the depression of every other form of it—and, secondly, to the mistaken analogy derived from the Jewish theocracy, that principles of civil government and the principles of christianity, even to church discipline, must be conjointly professed and maintained by the state as such. They must allow us to say, we have not so learned Christ. That in our view a nation has just so much national christianity as it possesses individual believers, and no more: that christianity is little advantaged but greatly corrupted by state patronage all over Christendom; and that as to unchristianizing ourselves by endeavouring to raise the Jew to a full participation of all our civil immunities, we judge that christianity has nothing to do with it, except to teach us to treat all men with equal justice, and to deprive no man of the rights to which he may be entitled as a subject of the realm, because he denies our religion. Acts of exclusion and proscription from such rights, founded on notions of our national faith, have always done more harm by embittering the enemies of christianity against our religion, than all the good they have ever done in its promotion.

But we come now to offer a few remarks upon the assumed superior

knowledge which our episcopalian friends profess upon the general subject of unfulfilled prophecy. They are the men that understand this difficult and complicated subject. They are the men to school and lecture us untaught dissenters. Well, let it be even so. Let us grant them all that this assumption involves, and let us enquire what they really can teach us, beyond what we already know and believe, in common. For instance, we all believe there is to be a glorious period in which the gospel is to become generally prevalent all over the earth, and it is pretty generally agreed that this period is probably not far distant. This really appears to us the most material point in prophecy, incomparably more so than the additional facts enforced by these writers, either of the temporal dominion of Christ or the secular aggrandisement of the saints, or the restoration of the Jews to Palestine, or the re-instatement of the Jewish temple and worship, or the re-endowment of the christian church with miraculous powers. When we contemplate these conjectures, we are plunged into inextricable confusion, for there are not two of our prophetical friends that can agree upon any one scheme. Each has an interpretation and a vision of his own. Those who boast of having made the subject of prophecy the almost exclusive theme of their study for many years, are not yet agreed upon the signification of the prophetic symbols, upon the dates when the prophetic eras commence, nor even upon the terms denoting these eras.

With the best wishes in the world to be instructed, and to gain an insight into this profound subject, and with much study for many years, we profess ourselves quite unable to select any scheme in which we could confide, or which we should feel justified in laying before the public mind, either from the pulpit or the press. It would be a great relief to us to see any scheme placed in that clear light which would inspire us with confidence and justify us in declaring our adherence to this party or that. Yet we have neither imbibed infidel nor Socinian opinions, nor can we charge ourselves with indifference. Our conscious ignorance of the subject has never interfered with our faith in the prophetic oracles. With the most earnest wish to discover the Scriptural theory, and with no little attention to our respective teachers, we have yet found the subject so entangled with difficulties, that we durst not take upon us to decide which interpretation is right, or whether all are not wrong. Certainly we feel strong objections to much in the theories of Viscount Mandeville and Mr. Brooks, and to not a little in that of Mr. Bickersteth; although we confess with pleasure he is one of the most sober, moderate, and charitable, and unquestionably one of the most pious and practical of all the prophetic interpreters.

Yet we have some faults to find with him, and especially, because he has not done justice to what he admits was once, and for many years, his own settled conviction upon the general subject. He appears to us to have gone from the one extreme into the other, and from confining his view to a strictly spiritual millennium, he has come to speak, according to our view, in a very strange and disparaging way of the strictly spiritual theory, and to have exaggerated the importance of a personal reign and advent, as if that

were incomparably more glorious than the spiritual dominion of the Saviour in the hearts of men. In fact, all the three authors, whose names stand at the head of this article, appear to us to have spoken very unwarrantably concerning the dominion of the gospel in the hearts of men; as if this were not, after all, the great consummation to which both the first and second coming of Christ were to be made subservient; as if, in fact, this were not the great and final object of the whole gospel economy from the first promise to the last manifestations of the Deity, whatever they may be, whether yet to be completed or already closed. To hear men of unquestionable piety only speak of a *spiritual millennium*, seems to intimate that they have discovered something vastly preferable, and yet the temporal reign, undistinguished from the spiritual, is essentially inferior and subordinate. Viscount Mandeville even goes the length of endeavouring to prove that those who expect only a spiritual millennium, cannot be looking at all for Christ's coming; and at page 14—16 he endeavours to identify them with that wicked servant who said, "the Lord delayeth his coming," and with the scoffers, (2 Pet. iii. 3,) who said, "Where is the promise of his coming?" This view he at last identifies with wilful ignorance,—"*which betokens a child of darkness, which tends to looseness of walk, and will end in sudden destruction, is to be reprobated, and carefully avoided.*"—p. 17.

This is severe and bold enough against the men who are labouring to win for the gospel a universal triumph, and who are proceeding in the plain path of Christian duty to preach the gospel to every creature. Supposing our friends are right in their interpretations, it will not recommend their views thus indiscriminately to fall upon and condemn all those, yet by far the most numerous class, both of ministers and people, who cannot see from scripture that they are warranted to expect any other coming of the Lord than one, in the assertion of his great power over the hearts of men, and the establishment of an inward and universal dominion in the soul. To class such with the "scoffers walking after their own lusts," and with the wicked servant in Matt. xxiv. who is to be cut in sunder, and have his portion with the hypocrites, (ver. 51,) "when there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth," is really too bad.

But we are ready to close with our accusers upon the main point of their theory; that the coming of Christ signifies his personal appearance again in the world. Mr. Brooks has taken no little pains to prove that this was the opinion of the fathers, the reformers, and other eminent divines, from the first age down to the present; that they were all right in indulging such an expectation, and that we are all very wrong who do not embrace the same opinion. Now, though it would be no difficult matter to dispute his assumption, that such was the universal view of the fathers and of the reformers, we will take his interpretation as true, and suppose that this has been the real opinion of all or most orthodox men ever since the apostolic age down to the present: what inference follows, but either that they have all been wrong in putting such an interpretation upon prophecy, or that prophecy itself has deceived them? We confess we should

much rather infer that all the good men who have held this opinion have been mistaken, than infer that prophecy was ever really intended to convey such a notion, for this plain reason, that we would rather admit that God is true, and that every man should be a liar, than admit that prophecy was ever intended to intimate events which have never taken place. We conceive that the difficulty which presses upon the subject, upon the admission that such has been the opinion of evil and good men, had better be thrown upon them than upon the sacred word; for let us admit that the word of God did really intend to foreshow such an event, and did require believers to look for it, and we deem them to be placed by the unbeliever in a dilemma from which there is really no escape. Gibbon says, in his 15th chapter, sect. ii. "In the primitive church the influence of the truth was very powerfully strengthened by an opinion which, however it may deserve respect for its usefulness and antiquity, has not been found agreeable to experience. It was universally believed that the end of the world and the kingdom of heaven were at hand;" which stated, in plain language, is as follows:—"Christ was either deceived, or else he, for politic ends, deluded his followers." This blasphemous suggestion springs, like other errors, from ignorance of the scriptures and the power of God. The expectation of the Christians was not unfounded: there was a possibility of Christ's advent, nay, I should say, that the coming was, in one sense, nearer than it was four hundred years afterwards; for the second coming does not depend upon a certain number of years being run out, but is revealed as a contingent event. If it depended simply on time, the apostle would assert a palpable truism; "for now (is) our salvation nearer than when we believed." Before, however, entering into proof, I would simply observe, that this view does not at all interfere with the doctrine of God's foreknowledge; for we say, with the schoolmen, "that God's will is so efficacious, as to cause all things to come to pass after such a manner as they do come to pass; to wit, necessary things necessarily, and contingent things contingently."—Mandeville, p. 195.

The noble Viscount's evasion of the infidel's insinuation, for we cannot call it an answer, proceeds upon the false assumption, that so far as the divine authority of inspiration is concerned, no time was specified in this case, and therefore it was only a contingent tradition—that is, as he afterwards explains, an event not absolutely foretold, irrespectively of the state of the world—and attached to a given date, whether mystical or otherwise—not like the return of the Jews from Babylon, limited to the date of seventy years; "but the period of Christ's second coming, I believe, is not revealed, for it depends on a particular state and condition of things: hence we must watch the signs of the times." Very well: but then what poor judges those fathers and their successors must have been to think they saw the signs when the true one had not appeared? It must be admitted, that the real signs have not yet been seen, and consequently that all who thought they have detected them in the several ages downward have been mistaken. However Lord Mandeville and his party may think to escape from the objection of the

infidel historian by this new-invented distinction of a contingent event—yet it does not meet the case: for the facts are notorious, the early fathers did expect the appearance of Christ and the end of the world absolutely in that age; and it is certain enough that it did not arrive, and that they were mistaken. If Lord M. has found out that this event is a contingent one, yet they understood nothing of this subtlety; but spoke of the event as certainly at hand. So that, upon Lord M.'s own showing, his predecessors were mistaken one way or other: and the objection of the infidel is unanswered by Lord M. at least: and it must remain not only unanswered, but unanswerable, if it is to be maintained that these fathers were right in their interpretation of the coming of Christ. If when Christ spake of his coming again he meant a personal appearance, and connected with the expression, this generation shall not pass away till all things be fulfilled—then he not only authorized this expectation, but he fixed a *time* quite as clear and definite as the seventy years' date of the Babylonish captivity, and then what becomes of Lord M.'s contingent event? There is no contingency in a date that is fixed to a given generation. So that it is quite certain to us, that Gibbon cannot be answered on this point by a real millennarian. But if it be fairly admitted, as we think it must be, that there was no contingency in the date of the event, and that the fathers were right in thinking that the age was fixed by the prophecy, but that they were wrong in expecting a personal appearance, and should have interpreted the prediction of his coming to the judgment upon Israel first, and the establishment of his spiritual kingdom, and connected with these, some parts of the prediction which relate only to that final judgment, of which the judgment on Israel was a type and pledge, they would then wrest the weapon out of the hands of the infidel, and adequately vindicate the sacred text; but they must then reject the interpretation of the early Christians, and lose thereby that support which their own notions derive, as they imagine, from their antiquity. This appears, and always has appeared, to us vastly preferable to the theory which admits the early Christians to have been right in their interpretation—though with the admission of their mistake, the doctrine of a personal advent and a temporal kingdom must part with its chief foundation in the favourite phrase of *Christ's Coming*—and its plea of antiquity in the opinion of the early Christians. But why should our prophetical friends hesitate to admit this of one part of the opinion of the first Christians, when their own theories assume these very early Christians to have been wrong in another part of that opinion? Lord M. and Mr. B. do not seem to think that they were right in making the end of the world synchronize with Christ's advent. But, on the contrary, Mr. Brooks, in particular, is very strong in asserting a premillennial advent, consequently these gentlemen place the end of the world at a great distance from the coming of Christ, which the fathers did not. That is, they take one part of the opinion of the first Christians, and plead its authority in defence of their own notion of a personal advent, but they reject another part of that early opinion, as to the end of the world, for that is not to be till a thousand years

after the personal advent—indeed, from Mr. Brooks's language, it seems it is never to be at all; for Christ and his saints are to reign in this world for ever, and not in heaven. We are really grieved to observe, that he indulges in some very strange speculations upon this subject, as well as upon the state of departed saints, which seem to us to symbolize very nearly with Socinian views, from which, on other occasions, he shrinks with instinctive horror.

Here, however, we must leave our friends, with simply expressing our regret, that they have enterprized a subject which has always proved too much for human powers. It is clear, that they have settled nothing but their own incompetence to describe before-hand the events that are yet to come.

Letters on the present State of the Visible Church of Christ, addressed to John Angel James, Minister of the Gospel in Birmingham. By R. M. Beverley. 12mo. 1836. Dinnis.

SECOND NOTICE.

We agree with Mr. Beverley, that it is desirable "to place the gospel ministry in a clear light, to bring it forth into open day, and not to allow it any false effect by shadowy back-grounds and the picturesque accompaniments of antiquity," p. 27. "We have all (he says) an inherent tendency to the old [papal] delusion. . . . How careful, then, should we be to avoid the paths wherein it is even possible to lapse into old errors! How sedulous to follow the new spiritual chart in our journey through the wilderness!" We agree with him that the church should now "go back to the fountain of original purity," that she may "recover the fair image of primeval simplicity," p. 26. But let us take heed not to clear away, as rubbish, what is of divine institution. If "the early Independents, by neglecting to state and define accurately their views of the ministry, its origin, limits, and functions, left the door open to sacerdotalism, which is sure to return unless the door is hopelessly barred and bolted against it:" p. 32. by all means let the door be effectually closed and secured against the re-entrance of that delusion.

Do our ministers, then, as Mr. Beverley insinuates, p. 53, "claim an exclusive right to the keys of knowledge?" Do they object to the members of our congregations teaching, as they have opportunity, "every one his neighbour, saying, Know the Lord," as important auxiliary means of hastening forward the time when "all shall know him, from the least unto the greatest?" Do they deny the duty of those who have long known the truth, to be themselves "teachers of others?" They claim, indeed, to be recognized and accredited public instructors to whom the administration of the word and ordinances of the gospel is, in a special manner, committed. In this restricted sense they may, *in virtue of their office*, be raised above their brethren, though not placed "on a spiritual eminence above them," just as a guide is above him whom he leads, and a teacher greater than he whom he teaches. A christian pastor must, in the nature of things, be superior to individual members of the flock, as a professional guide and adviser, in any other department, must,

so far, be superior to those whom he guides and advises. Dr. Owen recognized the distinction between those duly called to the ministerial office, and gifted brethren who may occasionally dispense the word.*

What then are the legitimate claims of Christian ministers upon the congregations committed to their charge? By christian ministers we understand, (as already intimated) those who solemnly undertake, and to whom is formally committed, the constant charge, guidance, and oversight of christian churches. Such persons are, on account of the office they sustain and the work they discharge, justly entitled, not certainly to *reverence*, in the strict and proper sense of that word, but to a high degree of affectionate esteem, honourable regard, and respectful treatment, as well as to competent maintenance and support, from those over whom they preside. "We beseech you, (says the apostle to the church of the Thessalonians,) to know them that are over you (προϊσταμενους υμων) in the Lord, and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake." 1 Ep. v. 12. "If any one desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work," or an honourable employment, (1 Tim. iii. 1.) not a mere honorary distinction. Yet the nature of the work renders the office itself honourable, and in this respect even modern and ordinary ministers may be allowed to "magnify," not themselves, but "*their office*;" for surely the church does not form any exception to the application of the rule—"Render to all *their due*; honour to whom honour." Rom. iii. 17. "Let the elders that rule well (οι καλως προεστώτες) be counted worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in the word and doctrine." 1 Tim. v. 17.†

Mr. Beverley's objection against the ministerial office, as lodged in the hands of a separate order or class of men, resolves itself into this,—that the necessary effect is, by investing them with special

* "There may be many occasional conversions wrought by the instrumentality of men who have real spiritual gifts for the dispensation of the word, and are occasionally called thereunto. But principally this work is committed unto the pastors of churches, for the conversion of souls. Ministers preach as ministers, whatever they preach. I know the indelible character is a figment; but the pastor's office is not such a thing as men may leave at home when they go abroad. It is not in a minister's own power, unless lawfully dismissed and deposed, to hinder him from preaching as a minister. And it is the duty of particular churches (one end of their institution being the calling and furthering the Catholic church) to part with their officers for a season, when called to preach in other places for the converting souls to Christ. We had a glorious ministry in the last age; wonderful instruments for the conversion of souls. Did they convert them as gifted men, and not as ministers? God forbid. I say, it may be done by them who have received gifts and [are] not called to office. But I know no ground any man hath to give up himself to the constant exercise of ministerial gifts, and not say to the Lord, in prayer, 'Lord, here am I, send me.'"—Works, vol. xvii. pp. 70, 71.

† It appears probable, from the following verse, that the word τιμής, translated honour, means here reward or maintenance. The text, however, if so interpreted, clearly proves, not only a distinction between the elders, or office-bearers, and the brethren, but also the right of the former to the means of support for themselves and their families. This, however, is sufficiently proved by the general principle of equity and justice mentioned in the next verse.

prerogatives, to raise them above the level occupied by their brethren in the church, and thus to degrade God's clergy, the people, from their proper elevation and dignity. "When one person is exalted, it follows of necessity that others must be depressed, and as the exaltation of a minister is with reference to spiritual matters, it follows also that the depression of those around him is a spiritual depression." But is it not rather degrading a christian church, to represent it as a community of ants, "having no guide, overseer, nor ruler," Prov. vi. 7; a promiscuous multitude, like the fishes of the sea, or the reptiles of the earth, "that have no ruler over them?" Hab. i. 14. We do not so understand the will of our divine Lord; nor can we believe that Mr. Beverley is opposed to all "order" in the church, or actuated by a wish to "put down (if we may lawfully quote the words in a way of mere accommodation,) all rule, and all authority and power" subordinate to that of Christ. Though not inclined to adopt, in reference either to political or ecclesiastical government, the maxim,

"Whate'er is best administered is best,"

We are well aware that much, very much, depends on the mode of conducting *any* form of administration. But the Christian Church has been "called unto liberty," and her members are not permitted to become "the slaves of men" in religious matters. One is their Sovereign Lord and paramount ruler, even Christ. To his authority in all ecclesiastical matters they owe absolute and implicit submission. Yet even "the clerical government," properly so called, involving, as we are told, a "surrender of the privileges of the church into the hands of an individual" acting as their "spiritual delegate," may be exercised in a mild and paternal manner. Mr. Beverley has introduced a beautiful and highly poetical digression, (an episode we might almost call it,) depicting, in glowing language, a country village, under the pastoral care of a pious and respected clergyman, thus proving that even the absolute government placed in the hands of "a priest of the Church of England" may be exercised in a kind and Christian manner. "We visit the cottages, and direct our conversation towards 'the vicar.' We hear nothing but expressions of respect, admiration, and gratitude. The living trust that they are on the road to Zion, through the teaching and ministry of their honoured spiritual guide, and they are sure that some of the dead—their dear friends and relations—are already in heaven, through a knowledge of the truth which they first heard from his lips. Righteousness is flourishing in the village; the manners of the villagers are courteous and obliging. . . the children are not neglected; the schools are judiciously and piously managed, and are well attended; the pastor is the soul of every movement in favour of a moral improvement; he suggests and cherishes, all that is good. . . . There is an air of peace in the village; the vicarage seems the abode of peace; we know that a good man is in it, who rules by love amongst the people." pp. 43, 44.

Apply this description of a village, brought under the influence

of evangelical instruction and mild pastoral controul to a Congregational church, over which presides "a pastor after God's heart," and we have an accurate representation of what a church and its pastor should be. Many such, unless we are greatly mistaken, may be found among us. How striking a contrast does this view of ministerial influence and authority, even among the parish priesthood of England, when in the hands of a *faithful* and *gentle* shepherd, present to that elsewhere exhibited by Mr. Beverley, and applied to, at least, some considerable portion of the English Congregational churches, but which we hope and believe does not correspond with the *general* fact. The clerical government, according to him, still exists; that is, the absolute rule or dominion of one over all the rest. A virtual surrender is made of all the privileges of the church into the hands of an individual; all the members follow, and obey with all docility, the ecclesiastical monarch of their society, leave all spiritual concerns in his hands, and, in one word, make him their priest, "to accomplish the service of God;" their spiritual delegate, to whom they consign their spiritual energies, as if he were a general proxy for all the people in their works of faith and labours of love.—pp. 66, 67. This alleged tendency of our ecclesiastical arrangements to create general inactivity, and to stifle the zeal of private members in our churches, is not, we trust, borne out by any large number of instances.

Mr. Beverley objects altogether (if we rightly understand him) to a stated, regular, and publicly recognized body of Christian ministers. If we concede to him, that the priesthood is entirely abolished, he is not satisfied. He equally objects to Presbyter as to Priest, and tells us, that "so long as an ordained learned ministry is kept up, the arguments of Papists cannot be answered." Here we consider him to be egregiously in error; Jesus Christ is the only priest in his church, but not, therefore, the sole office-bearer. "When he ascended on high, he gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers," Eph. iv. 8, 11. He is himself the chief Shepherd, the great Pastor and Bishop of souls, but he has appointed inferior shepherds to act under him. "God hath set some in the church—teachers—helps—governments," 1 Cor. xii. 28, stated permanent officers, (we apprehend,) denoted by those terms.

Mr. Beverley objects, not only to the mode of ordination practised in Congregational churches, but also to all intervention of ministers in the work of publicly admitting a person into the pastoral office over a particular church. All solemn consecration to office by persons belonging to "a visible order of men," themselves invested with, and continuing in the actual exercise of that office, he repudiates, as partaking of "sacerdotalism." His definition of a priest, is "a person consecrated for the sacerdotal office by an order of priests already existing," but he confounds, as it appears to us, a body of men belonging to a separate order, instituted by Christ in his church, with the order of priesthood called by him "the corporation of priests," under the popish hierarchy. Hence arises what we consider his *prejudice* against ordination. "Paul (he tells us) began

preaching and teaching without ordination, and even purposely avoided it," p. 25; but Paul was an apostle, an extraordinary officer, immediately called and appointed by Jesus Christ himself, "not of men, neither by man."

His chief objection to the ministerial function, as it exists among Congregational Dissenters, is on account of the mode of appointment and induction into the regular and stated discharge of its duties. But the rite of ordination, according to our view, is not that which, properly speaking, *constitutes*—certainly it is not that rite *alone* which constitutes—a minister in our churches. In fact, ordination never takes place among us, till a particular church has accepted the gift of teaching, and other qualifications possessed by or assumed to belong to the individual.

We are not aware that this rite is considered "indispensable" in all cases; but although it may be held necessary to a *regular* and orderly admission into a stated pastoral charge, that is not because it communicates any official authority, or empowers the ordained party ministerially to dispense "grace and pardon." It amounts to no more than a solemn recognition and public ratification of a previous act,—the act of election by the church to the office of their pastor, by the assembled representatives of neighbouring churches. The service is conducted, indeed, as all other public services are, by the ministers present: but we see not why it should be considered as their sole and exclusive *act*; at least, it cannot be fairly considered as their mere *personal* act, when they officiate in the name of those churches over which they preside, and which, virtually, they represent. Whether this view be strictly accurate or not, it must be allowed, that their power to ordain is entirely dependent on a free, uncontrolled exercise of the previous and paramount right of the church to *elect*. Mr. Beverley exceedingly dislikes the ceremony of laying the hands of the officiating ministers upon the head of the person to be ordained, generally practised on the occasion, but not approved or adopted by *all* our ministers. We trust there are no "lay dissenters," who witness this ceremony, so ignorant and uninformed as to suppose, that "the ministers convey some faculty of holiness, and are a corporation divinely chartered for that purpose." If so, "the evil would indeed be no trifle," (p. 33,) and the custom ought to be no longer tolerated. For those who use and approve this rite, we may say, in the words of the excellent John Robinson, "imposition of hands is no more than a sign, denoting the person, not a cause effecting the thing; the gift of prophecy comes not by office, but being found in persons before, makes them capable of the office by due means." Our ministers, in using this rite, do not profess to confer holy orders, or to imprint a peculiar character, much less do they pretend, that by the laying on of their hands, the Holy Spirit is conveyed.

That "a learned ministry is not desirable," is a position which we rejoice to believe that our churches are not prepared to adopt.

We were rather surprised at the disparaging terms applied to *learning* by Mr. Beverley, a scholar himself, and therefore able to appreciate erudition. We find him, indeed, when not writing con-

roversially, expatiating in eloquent language on the value of command over *the press*, as a powerful coadjutor of the christian church, against the powers of darkness. He rejoices, on her behalf, in the prospect of "universal education;" assured that the "false logic" of living sceptics will be detected and their "fallacies" exposed, as their predecessors have been. "Whatever (he adds) is true or wise, is an element of the church's power. Mankind cannot be too wise for her; nothing is against her but ignorance and superstition. Ignorance, even in the physical world, has done her injury, because it has been made a prop for superstition; there is, therefore, no secret of nature that she would not see unravelled; there is nothing that the human mind can possibly learn that she would forbid to be learned, unless it be some of the hidden things of dishonesty, which it is a shame even to mention."

"As, then, this is an age of science and knowledge, and of great labours of the press, the church rejoices, and will rejoice; her desire is to march forth with science *pari passu*, and to show men how only they can be happy in this life and that which is to come, whilst others are teaching them to subdue the material world, and in power and wisdom to take a station but a little lower than angels."—p. 221.

Yet learning, as a qualification for the more useful, acceptable, and efficient discharge of the christian ministry, is deemed only "tolerable in the present imperfect state of things."—p. 93. It "does not, in fact, help a preacher of the gospel, and is often the cause of excessive mischief and confusion in the church."—p. 69.

"That a minister should be a learned person, with no inconsiderable store of general information and critical knowledge—a man of erudition and science," in such times as these, appears, to say the least, very desirable. We consider it no matter of reproach that "a learned ministry is no where more highly esteemed than amongst the Calvinistic dissenters."—p. 54. Mr. Beverley also awards the palm of learning to dissenting ministers *as a body*, when compared with "the whole multitude of the clergy."—p. 56. But that "a learned ministry is *indispensable* in the service of the church of Christ," is not "the opinion of Congregational ministers."—p. 58.

We are no advocates for "pulpit-learning," in the proper sense of that phrase. Henry Jacob, one of the founders of English Congregational churches, "whose writings speak him learned," as Anthony Wood allows, published in 1604, "*A Position against vain-glorious, and that which is falsely called, learned preaching.*"* We agree with Mr. Beverley, that "nothing ought to be less palatable to a Christian than an exhibition of metaphysics, philosophy, and school-learning, in the pulpit," p. 78. We object as strongly as he does to an ostentatious display of critical acumen or curious erudition *in the pulpit*; but we are not aware that dissenting ministers are justly chargeable with obtruding their scholarship on the congregations whom they address. There may be a want of simplicity in the pulpit style of some preachers among us, and a deficiency of the

* Brooks' Lives of the Puritans, Vol. 2. p. 333.

explicit statement of evangelical truth in the doctrinal positions of others, but we may safely assert that neither critical discussion nor metaphysical disquisition is now introduced into the ordinary sermons of our ministers in general. Learning is not "the cherished strength of the dissenting churches;" yet we believe they do "stand in need of an instructed ministry, whose business it is to explain the scriptures thoroughly to their congregations, and to leave nothing in uncertainty" which can be made plain and clear, pp. 64—66. An extensive acquaintance with ancient history, chronology, oriental antiquities, as well as accurate knowledge of particular languages, dialects, and idioms, and "skill in philology," are eminently fitted to "assist in the noble labour of elucidating scripture," p. 64. In a word, *learning* of every kind, when kept in its proper place, may be lawfully introduced as "an auxiliary to the gospel," p. 63. We may ask Mr. Beverley himself whether erudition in a public teacher of religion is not *good*, if used lawfully; or whether his own favorite divine, Dr. Owen, was not "a good minister of Jesus Christ," although "a learned theologian, a scholar deeply soaked in Greek and Latin?"—pp. 67, 70.

We agree with Mr. Beverley, that the excellency of the power by which sinners are turned from darkness to light, is of God and not of man; and our churches are not, we trust, chargeable with the impiety of putting human science in the place of divine tuition, equally necessary for all, and promised alike to all the children of God. But we cannot adopt the notion that "the spiritual knowledge" communicated to all believers by "the immediate agency of God," is the only knowledge important and desirable for public teachers of Christianity in modern times. Mr. Beverley argues, that learning was not required for preaching the Gospel in the apostolical days; therefore its assistance is *now* as little to be desired "as a prelate's diocesan mitre, or any other figment of man," p. 64. The apostles were inspired men, endowed with miraculous powers. Undoubtedly the Holy Spirit's ordinary teaching is sufficient for spiritual illumination, but as it does not supersede thought, meditation, and study, in the private reading of the scriptures, so neither does it render knowledge of various kinds, especially *biblical* knowledge in all its departments, inexpedient or undesirable for those whose duty it is, by virtue of their office, to explain, unfold, and illustrate the meaning of the *whole* word of God.

We are not concerned to defend the "modern exegesis," farther than as it assists a minister to interpret the word of God; that is, to give the real sense on fixed and certain principles. Even supposing, (which we do not allow,) that the *Bible* is the *ne plus ultra* of a preacher's knowledge, how are the more obscure and difficult parts of that book to be understood and explained without various other knowledge, and some considerable degree of learning? If "*all* scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and instruction in righteousness," "the man of God," in order to be "perfect and thoroughly furnished unto every good work," should be able to elucidate the whole of

its diversified contents. There is a class of writers and preachers, among whom we should be grieved to include Mr. Beverley, who are apt to speak of "matters incidental," "the mere outside, the mere shell of the truth," "things which have no savour of life in them, nothing that can profit, or illuminate, or edify the Christian," and from which, therefore, they are fain to extract some fanciful spiritual meaning, by the curious arts of a Keach or a Gill, and such profane *mis*-interpreters of the historical, typical, and parabolical portions. "Mischievous learning, expository subtleties and false principles of exegesis," are allegations to be justly made against this class of writers, as well as against those of the modern neological school. The former have long been discarded as unsafe and dangerous guides; and we trust the lurid meteoric glare of the new "German light," will never be permitted to shed its baleful influence on the lecture-rooms of our colleges, nor the technical phraseology of modern biblical criticism, be incorporated into our ordinary pulpit dialect.

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The Gospels Harmonized: with notes, explanatory, experimental, and practical, forming a complete commentary on the four Evangelists: chiefly by Adam Clarke, LL.D. F.A.S. Arranged from the best authorities, for the use of Ministers and Students, and divided into sections of convenient length for family reading. By Samuel Dunn. 8vo. Second Thousand. Simpkin and Co.

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The Christian Visitor: or, Select Portions of the Four Gospels, with expositions and prayers. Designed to assist the friends of the poor and afflicted. By the Rev. William Jowett, M.A. 12mo. Seeley.

The Life of Nicholas Lewis, Count Zinzendorf, Bishop and Ordinary of the Church of the United or Moravian Brethren. By the Rev. August Gottlieb,

Spangenberg. Translated from the German, by Samuel Jackson, Esq. With an Introductory Preface, by the Rev. P. Latrobe. Royal 8vo. Holdsworth.

Lectures on the Revivals of Religion. By Charles G. Finney. From Notes by the Editor of the New York Evangelist: revised by the Author. Seventh Edition, each two thousand copies. 8vo. Tegg and Son.

The Christian Fathers of the First and Second Centuries: their principal remains at large: with selections from their other writings. Partly in original and partly in approved translations. By the Rev. E. Bickersteth, Rector of Watton, Herts. 12mo. Seeley.

British Colonization and Coloured Tribes. By J. Bannister, late Attorney General of New South Wales. 12mo. W. Ball.

Our Young Men: their Importance and Claims. A Prize Essay. By F. A. Cox, D. D. LL. D. 12mo. W. Ball.

Young Men: or an Appeal to the several classes of Society in their behalf. By the Rev. Stephen Davies, B.C.L. 12mo. Hatchard and Son.

The Psalmist: a Collection of Psalm and Hymn Tunes. The greater part by Vincent Novello. Part III. Jackson and Walford.

Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans, with Remarks on the Commentaries of Dr. Macknight, Professor Tholuck, and Professor Moses Stuart. By Robert Haldane, Esq. Vol. II. Chapters vi.—x. Second Edition. 12mo. Hamilton and Co.

Alice Benden, or the Bowed Shilling. By Charlotte Elizabeth. 18mo. Seeley.

Hints to Professing Christians on Consistency. By a Village Pastor. 18mo. Wightman.

The Happy Transformation: or the History of a London Apprentice: an authentic Narrative, communicated in a Series of Letters, with a Preface by W. H. Pearce, Missionary from Calcutta, to whom the Letters were addressed. 18mo. Wightman.

The Young Man's Aim to Improvement, Success, and true Happiness. By Mentor. 18mo. Glasgow: Gallie.

The First Class Tune Book, for Young Children. The Singing Master, No. III. Taylor and Walton.

LITERARY INTELLIGENCE.

WORKS IN THE PRESS, OR IN PROGRESS.

Shortly will be published, Schism, as opposed to the Unity of the Church; its Nature, Examples, Disguises, Evil Consequences, Sinfulness, and Cure — The Prize of One Hundred Pounds for the best Essay on Schism, proposed by Sir Culling Eardley Smith, has just been awarded to this Essay by the adjudicators, the Hon. and Rev. Baptist W. Noel, M.A., and the Rev. James Sherman.

In the press, a volume of Sermons, by the Rev. C. B. Tayler, Author of Records of a Good Man's Life, &c. crown 8vo.

The Rev. L. Vernon Harcourt, (son of the Archbishop of York,) has in the press a work on the "Doctrine of the Deluge." His object is to vindicate the Scriptural History of the Deluge from the doubts which have been recently thrown upon it by geological speculations. This the author has endeavoured to accomplish by showing, upon the testimony of a long list of ancient and modern authors, that since the era of that catastrophe a set of religionists never ceased to exist, whose opinions and usages were founded upon a veneration of the Ark as the preserver of their race. In 2 vols. 8vo.

To be ready in May, in one vol. 12mo. Sermons, and Outlines of Sermons, by eminent Ministers deceased; together with Miscellaneous Pieces selected from the Papers of the late J. W. Morriss, author of Memoirs of Andrew Fuller, Biographical Recollections of Robert Hall, &c. &c.

TRANSACTIONS OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES, AT HOME AND ABROAD.

MEETING OF THE CONGREGATIONAL UNION.

The Annual Assembly of the Congregational Union of England and Wales will be held on Tuesday, the 8th of May, in the Congregational Library, Blomfield-street, Finsbury.

The Annual Meeting of the Colonial Missionary Society will be held on Friday, the 11th of May, in Finsbury Chapel. A full announcement of all particulars will be early made.

DEPUTATION FROM THE COLONIAL MISSION TO LORD DURHAM.

On Monday, the 26th March, a deputation from the Committee of the Colonial Missionary Society waited by appointment on the Earl of Durham, to present to his Lordship the following memorial on the operations of the Society in Canada, and on the views of the committee in respect to the ecclesiastical interests of those most important colonies. The deputation, which consisted of J. R. Mills, Esq., Treasurer of the Society, the Rev. Dr. Reed, the Rev. J. Blackburn, the Rev. A. Wells, and G. Gull, Esq., met with a very courteous reception, and obtained a lengthened conference with his Lordship on the subjects included in the memorial.

Every thing concurs to prove the absolute and most urgent necessity of immediate energetic efforts to uphold and extend the efforts of the Society in Canada. The late disastrous revolt has involved many of our brethren there in temporary difficulties, against which it is impossible they should successfully struggle without liberal aid from the Society; yet, there is every reason to believe, these difficulties will be but temporary. The ultimate results of the revolt will, in all probability, be favourable to Missionary efforts. Meantime these sad occurrences have proved more clearly than ever the absolute need of immediate, extensive operations for the increase of religion in those wide regions. The Committee most urgently need men and money. There is before them a most inviting field, a noble opportunity for extensive usefulness. It is hoped the British churches will supply them with the means of effectually occupying it.

"To his Excellency the Right Honourable Earl of Durham, Governor-General and Commander in Chief of the Canadas.

"The Memorial of the Committee of the 'Colonial Missionary Society,' in connexion with the 'Congregational Union of England and Wales,' respectfully sheweth,

"That your Memorialists have learned with high satisfaction, in which they participate with the whole British public, that your Lordship has received her Majesty's appointment to proceed to Canada, invested with extraordinary powers, not only for the present pacification of those important provinces by the redress of all real grievances, but also for placing their permanent institutions on such a firm basis of liberty and justice as may secure their lasting repose and prosperity; and your Memorialists earnestly hope that, by the blessing of Divine Providence on measures which will approve themselves to your Lordship's liberal, enlightened, and patriotic mind, your Lordship may be eminently successful in the arduous mission on which you are soon to leave your native land.

"Your Lordship's Memorialists are engaged in the conduct of an institution, the object of which is to provide, to the utmost extent of the means it may acquire, ministers and means of religion for the British Colonies. This great design, the Colonial Missionary Society, which your Memorialists conduct, aims to promote on principles and by means in accordance with the known sentiments of that body of British Christians by whom it is sustained, the Independent or Congregational Dissenters. Your Memorialists need scarcely therefore inform your

Lordship, that its entire pecuniary resources are derived from the voluntary contributions of its friends, whether in this country or in the colonies.

"As the Canadas are already, and are likely hereafter still more to become, a principal scene of the operations of the Colonial Missionary Society, it would have been on the part of its conductors a most obvious dereliction of duty had they omitted, on the eve of your Lordship's departure for those provinces, at a period so critical in their history, and for purposes of such great and lasting importance to their interests, to commend the Society and its agents to your Lordship's favourable consideration.

"Your Memorialists assure your Lordship, that the objects of their Society are exclusively religious; and that its affairs, equally in this country and in the Colonies, are, as far as your Memorialists can know the fact, conducted on religious principles, and by religious means. Your Memorialists always adopt with reluctance, in connexion with their efforts to promote religion, proceedings that wear in any degree a political aspect; and when on any occasion they adopt such a course, it is only because the political measures in respect to which they express their opinions, have an immediate, and, as they judge, an unfavourable influence on religion. The sentiments your Memorialists are anxious now to lay before your Lordship, are offered by them not as their judgment on questions of merely human policy, but as religious convictions derived from scripture, and holding authority over their consciences. The great and cherished object of your Lordship's Memorialists is, so to detach religion from political institutions and interests, that neither it nor its ministers may be any longer mixed up with the desecrating contentions and parties of the world.

"Your Memorialists venture to assure your Lordship, that you will find the ministers they have sent out to Canada among the quiet of the land, assiduously employed in their proper vocation of promoting piety, education, and virtue by all appropriate means. Your Memorialists believe they will be found fairly representative of the class of Christians in this country with whom they were associated before they departed on their present arduous mission. It will not be their disparagement in the estimation of a Governor of your Lordship's liberal and noble sentiments, when your Lordship finds them the steady friends of religious and civil liberty, neither merging their sacred character and office in the strife of the political partizan, nor judging that their religious functions either deprive them of their rights, or absolve them from their obligations as citizens. Some of these excellent men, as your Memorialists believe them to be, have, during the late criminal revolt, been subjected to suspicions and accusations, and in consequence, to domiciliary visits and searches. In the full belief, that after the strictest inquiry, they will be found entirely clear of all participation in the designs and plans of those who have risen in arms against the lawful authorities; and in the firm persuasion that your Lordship will be found the patron and friend of the loyal, benevolent, and liberal-minded of every party in religion or politics, your Memorialists commend their agents in the Canadas to your Lordship's protection and favour.

"Your Lordship is undoubtedly well aware that great dissatisfaction has prevailed, especially in Upper Canada, amongst a very numerous portion of the colonists, on the subjects of reserved lands for the clergy, and of grants from the colonial revenues for the support of religion among different bodies of Christians, but especially among those connected with the Established Churches of England and Scotland; and that the most decided opposition has been given to all plans for endowing and establishing forms or sects of religion by the State. It cannot be necessary that your Memorialists should refer your Lordship for proof of these statements to the evidence given before Committees of the British Parliament, and to the proceedings of the House of Assembly of Upper Canada, printed by their authority. Throughout these authentic documents the most ample proof of these facts may be found. But your Lordship is doubtless well acquainted with all the facts and reasonings connected with a subject so vitally affecting the peace and welfare, not of the Canadas only, but of every Christian community

in the world. And your Lordship must have observed the renewed efforts now commencing in Parliament to obtain for those Christians in Upper Canada, originally connected with the Church of England, a more exclusive establishment and support, as well as to procure out of the public funds of this country a provision for the Bishop of Quebec.

"Your Lordship will be prepared for the avowal on the part of your Memorialists, of their entire accordance in the sentiments of their fellow-subjects in Canada, who deprecate the application to the affairs of religion, of the authority and wealth of the State. In their view it is altogether unnecessary and unscriptural, injurious and unjust. It corrupts religion, embarrasses government; and alienates from each other different bodies of the subjects of the same realm. If this momentous subject be considered as a question of religion, your Memorialists declare their conviction that State establishments of Christianity are not only not required, but are condemned by the New Testament, the only statute-book of the Christian church;—if, as a question of national policy then, they respectfully appeal to your Lordship's enlightened mind, whether it can be sound and true policy that a State should deal unequally with different classes of the people, in all other respects equal, on the sole ground of diversity in their theological opinions;—if, as matter of experience then, neither to allude to the past, nor to extend observation to other countries, your Lordship well knows that at this hour in the three United Kingdoms of Great Britain, their three ecclesiastical establishments are the greatest remaining sources of strife; but for which our favoured country would enjoy a repose more complete than was ever perhaps known in the history of mankind in a great and free nation.

"Your Lordship will, we are informed, soon depart for Canada, to inquire into all the circumstances of that important but disturbed country. The institutions now given to Canada, where society is as yet rudimental and unformed, will have great and lasting influence on the whole structure of the social edifice. The advice of your Lordship will have great weight with the Imperial Parliament in legislating for those infant empires; and your conclusions will, in all probability, become law over wide regions for a great nation of British origin during many ages. Your Lordship will pardon the earnestness with which your Memorialists venture to urge on your attention that branch of your inquiries and recommendations which relates to matters ecclesiastical, in respect to which, permit them to say, the whole duty of governments is to abstain from every exertion of authority which is not directed to secure equally to all their subjects the unmoled enjoyment of the rights and liberties of conscience, leaving the advancement of religion to the zeal of its professors, the force of truth, and the care of Heaven. Meanwhile your Lordship's Memorialists, whatever may be the course adopted by the supreme legislature on this momentous subject, will continue their utmost exertions to promote religion in the Canadas, by voluntary efforts and contributions, secure in that perfect liberty of religious opinion and action enjoyed by all her Majesty's subjects; for in the midst of these struggles for religious equality, they would never be ungrateful that they enjoy complete religious liberty.

"Your Memorialists, in conclusion, again assure your Lordship of their high esteem—of their gratitude for your Lordship's past exertions for the promotion of every thing liberal and just in the institutions and policy of our common country—of their undoubting persuasion that your Lordship's administration will be conducted on the most upright, patriotic principles; and of their earnest desire and prayer that your Lordship's success in promoting the peace and welfare of the Canadas may equal your Lordship's largest wishes, and the highest expectations of your Sovereign and your fellow-subjects.

"Signed on behalf of the Committee of the Colonial Missionary Society, by their direction,

"ALGERNON WELLS, Secretary."

POSTPONEMENT OF THE CONGREGATIONAL LECTURE.

We regret to learn that the Congregational Lecture will be omitted this year, owing to circumstances which left the Committee of the Congregational Library no alternative. We understand that the Rev. Thomas Morell, President of Coward College, in consequence of a heavy domestic bereavement, has been compelled to relinquish his engagement to supply the place of Dr. J. Pye Smith, who had been obliged through illness to decline fulfilling a previous engagement made some years ago. It is expected that Mr. M. will, D. V. deliver the course for next year, on the Discipline and Government of the early Christian Church.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONGREGATIONAL DISSENTERS OF SCOTLAND
AGAINST ENDOWMENTS TO THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH OF THAT
COUNTRY.

At a Meeting of the Congregational Dissenters, called by circular sent to each Congregational Church in Scotland, when there were present Representatives from the Churches in George Street, Blackfriar's Street, and Printfield, Aberdeen; Dalkeith, Denholm, Dundee; College Street, Albany Street, and Richmond Court, Edinburgh; George Street, and Nile Street, Glasgow; Greenock, Haddington, Linlithgow, Leith, Montrose, Musselburgh, Perth, Portobello, Paisley, St. Andrew's, Stirling, and Wick; and when letters approving of the object of the Meeting were produced from the Churches in Bervie, Newport, Garlieston, Millsent, Blairgowrie, Dunkeld, Nairn, Forres, Innerkip, Hamilton; Frederick Street, Aberdeen; Sauchieburn, Blackhills, Inverurie; Albion Street, and Brown Street, Glasgow; Dumfries, Alloa, Elgin, Banff, Arbroath, Fraserburgh, Helensburgh, Rothesay, Inverness, Ayr, Leven, Knockando, Letham, and Forfar.

Adam Black, Esq., having been called to the Chair, and the Meeting having been opened with prayer by the Rev. Dr. Paterson,

I.—It was moved by Dr. Russell of Dundee, and seconded by Mr. Gallie of Glasgow—"That this meeting avow their settled conviction that the only mode of supporting and propagating Christianity, authorised by the Word of God, is by the voluntary exertions of those who appreciate its value, and are desirous of enjoying and disseminating the advantage which the ministration of its ordinances confers; and that all that the churches of Christ are at liberty to ask from the civil ruler is, in matters of religion to be let alone, and in civil matters to be protected in the enjoyment of all privileges which are common to the nation at large."

II.—It was moved by the Rev. Mr. Fraser of Albany Street, and seconded by Mr. Sommerville of Dalkeith—"That all interference of the civil power for the compulsory support of the Christian religion is objectionable, not only on the ground that it substitutes a scheme of human device in the place of that which the great Head of the Church has appointed for the maintenance of his kingdom, but also on the ground, that in selecting a particular form of doctrine and worship as the creed of the nation, it assumes for an earthly authority the power which belongs only to God as supreme Lord of the conscience: That in making laws for the Christian Church, it invades the prerogatives of Him who is the only governor of that Church, and who has already prescribed in his Word all that is requisite for its efficient administration: That by making the Church commensurate with the nation, it breaks down that distinction which Christ has established between his people and the world, and thereby prepares the way for making the mere profession of Christianity occupy that place in general estimation, which is due only to genuine godliness: That by exacting the pecuniary support of the endowed sect from the community indiscriminately, it oppresses the consciences and interferes with the rights of those who are not connected with that sect: And that, by affording no security for fidelity of ministration, or purity of conduct in those who are appointed by it as teachers of Christianity, it is calculated to im-

pede rather than to advance the interests of true and spiritual religion throughout the kingdom."

III.—It was moved by the Rev. W. Massie of Perth, and seconded by the Rev. Mr. Napier of Dalkeith—"That the present application of the Church of Scotland for the endowment of additional places of worship in its communion, is as unjustifiable as it is uncalled for and unbecoming; and that the assumption on which it proceeds, that all the population of the country is placed under the spiritual supervision of that Church, and ought to be provided at the expense of the State with Church accommodation and pastoral superintendence within its pale, is absurd in itself, as well as insulting to those bodies of Dissenters, by whose voluntary efforts the cause of religion and morality has, even by the admission of Churchmen themselves, been so extensively served throughout the country."

IV.—It was moved by the Rev. Mr. Kennedy of Aberdeen, and seconded by Mr. E. Allan of Linlithgow—"That entertaining these sentiments, and consequently deprecating the concession of those demands which the Church of Scotland is at present making upon the government, as an uncalled for expenditure of the public money, as an act of oppression and injustice to Dissenters, and as tending to extend and perpetuate what has been amply proved to be an unscriptural, unequal, and impolitic system, this Meeting feel it to be their duty to bear their public and united testimony, as representatives of the Congregational Churches in Scotland, assembled for this specific purpose, against the lawfulness and expediency of any such concession, and to use every legitimate means within their reach in order to prevent its being made."

V.—It was moved by the Rev. Mr. Alexander of Edinburgh, and seconded by Mr. Hercus of Grenock—"That the following Memorial be presented to Lord Melbourne, as head of her Majesty's Government:—

To the Right Honourable Lord Viscount Melbourne, &c. &c., and the other Members of her Majesty's Government, the Memorial of the Congregational Dissenters of Scotland, adopted at a meeting of Representatives,

Respectfully Showeth,

That while your Memorialists hold it to be their duty not to interfere in their denominational capacity with political matters which do not bear directly upon the interests of religion, they cannot regard it as otherwise than imperative upon them to employ all legitimate means of opposing the accomplishment of those schemes which they may deem injurious to the cause of Scriptural truth and purity.

That your Memorialists are Dissenters from the Church as by law established, not so much on account of certain abuses which may have crept into its administration, as because they regard the institution of a National Church, receiving endowments from the State, as directly calculated to deteriorate the quality, as well as diminish the quantity of religion throughout the kingdom, inasmuch as it is incompatible with that spiritual constitution which Christ has bestowed upon his Church, and utterly subversive of those laws which he has given for its government, support, and propagation; because it is an impeachment of the power of the Truth, to bear witness to which, he came into the world—Truth, which can only be established by evidence, not by the sword of the civil power; which can be extended not by weapons which are carnal, but which are spiritual, "Mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds,"—because in the means which it employs for the support of religion, it stands in direct opposition to the Scriptural injunction, "Let him that is taught in the word communicate to him who teacheth in all good things;"—and because, from its tendency to incorporate the world with the Church, it proves ruinous to the souls of multitudes, and destroys the purity of the Church, which is the kingdom of Christ, and of which his declaration is, "My kingdom is not of this world."

That while, in common with their Christian brethren of all denominations, they observe and deplore the prevalence, to a painful extent, of ignorance and irreligion among all classes of the community, your Memorialists are at the same time satisfied, that as this evil has arisen not so much from a deficiency in the means of religious instruction, as from indisposition on the part of the people to avail themselves of those means already provided, the remedy is not to be found in the mere erection and endowment of new places of worship, which would only have the effect of producing a new distribution of the persons at present attending the churches of the Establishment, but in the employment of suitable individuals to carry the gospel, by domiciliary visitation, to the abodes of those who are living in ignorance or neglect of its truths—a plan, the efficiency of which has already been proved upon a large scale in different parts of the country.

That with these views, your Memorialists are constrained to express the deep concern with which they have learned, that a scheme has been urged upon your Lordship's consideration, the object of which is to accomplish the further extension of the Church of Scotland, by the endowment of additional places of worship in connection with it, an object which they can regard in no other light than as calculated to multiply the difficulties which already lie in the way of the progress of pure and undefiled religion throughout the land; and on this ground alone, even were the proposed scheme free from those more generally acknowledged objections which arise from its trenching upon the claims of equity and expediency, they would feel it to be their duty to oppose it. But, while they rest their opposition mainly on this ground, they are not insensible to the gross injustice of which they, along with other Dissenters, will be made the subjects, if a grant be made from the public purse for the further aggrandizement of a sect which is already endowed contrary to all reason and equity, which, to say the least, has not deserved better at the hands of the Government than any other sect, and which is almost avowedly moved in its present undertaking by a mere feeling of hostility to those whose unassisted efforts for the religious instruction of the community have exposed its inefficiency, and eclipsed its reputation.

That your Memorialists feel the injustice that would be involved in such a grant the more keenly, that for a number of years they have, besides maintaining the ordinances of religion among themselves, carried on an extensive system of Missionary operations in different parts of the country—many of which lie beyond the range of operations contemplated by those who are seeking for endowments,—and, while they have thus been the means of conveying the light of gospel knowledge to many who were previously living in the grossest ignorance and superstition, they have, at the same time, obtained such an accumulation of evidence in proof of the utter inefficiency of the Established Church as an instrument for the propagation of religious instruction, that they cannot refrain from expressing the conviction that, had this country been left solely to the exertions of the Establishment for its religious instruction, the ignorance, irreligion, and immorality which now prevail, would have been multiplied and deepened to an inconceivable extent.

May it therefore please your Lordship to take this Memorial into your serious consideration, and to decline recommending any further endowment of the Church of Scotland, and your Memorialists, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

(Signed)

ADAM BLACK, Chairman.

CONGREGATIONALISM IN THE SHETLAND ISLES.

Although the Shetland Isles form an integral portion of Great Britain, yet multitudes of its southern inhabitants know nothing more about them than this, that they produce small shaggy ponies and diminutive black cattle! They are, however, peopled by 30,000 souls, who inhabit 29 islands, situated between 60° and 61° N. latitude, who, though far remote from the metropolis of the empire, possess qualities and attainments too, which many of its popu-

lation do not enjoy. There are few of the people unable to read, and they are generally characterized by a kind and courteous carriage.

Amongst these interesting islanders Messrs. J. A. Haldane and William Innes made a preaching tour nearly thirty-eight years ago, when itinerant labours were thought, by the *orderly* people of Scotland, to be irregular, unseemly, and dangerous.

Uninfluenced by these prejudices, these apostolic labourers persevered, and their visit excited attention, awoke inquiry, and led some to embrace the leading truths of the kingdom of Christ. Soon after, Mr. James Tulloch, a native of the country, travelled over a great part of the isles, and though he possessed but few advantages of mental culture, yet his labours were not in vain.

The claims and cares of a numerous family would not permit him to relinquish his civil occupations, but he continues to labour as far as his secular engagements will admit, and holds the pastoral charge of a small church at Bixter.

In July, 1806, Messrs. George Reid and Isaac Nicol were sent to preach the Gospel in these isles. The latter, after some time, returned to Scotland, but the former continues to hoary hairs in these evangelical labours. At that time there were a few disciples in Lerwick, the capital of the islands, who wished "to be taught the way of the Lord more perfectly." To these Mr. Reid preached, and in the town, over the mainland, and in most of the inhabited islands, his labours were abundant, self-denying, and eventually successful. In July, 1808, a christian church, on Congregational principles, was formed in Lerwick, only then consisting of 16 members, 11 men and 5 women. They have now grown to more than 100 communicants besides a pretty respectable congregation. While Mr. Reid itinerated amongst the isles, "an aged disciple," James Paterson, one of the first dissenters in Lerwick, and a deacon of the church, was accustomed "to speak to the people" on the Lord's Day. Though a plain mechanic and unlettered man, yet his biblical and experimental knowledge, his native shrewdness, his christian consistency, his weight of character, and powers of communication were such as to command the respect of all classes of the community. He was listened to, not with patience only, but with profit and pleasure. Although he rests from his labours, his example cannot be lost on the churches of these isles.

Early in the summer of 1821, the Committee of the Congregational Union of Scotland requested another minister to spend *eleven* weeks itinerating over the greater part of the country, from the Island of Unst, near the extreme northern boundary, to the southern extremity of the country at Sumburgh Head; thence over the west quarter of the mainland, in Walls and Sandness, to the Isles of Popa and Foula, supposed to be the *Ultima Thule* of the ancients. The hospitality the people displayed was quite patriarchal, and the tour was productive of much spiritual good.

In 1823 the late Mr. Alexander Keir was sent on a similar excursion by the Scottish Congregational Union, and such a salutary effect was produced by his labours, that he was ultimately induced to resign his pastoral charge at Cambuslan, and, under the auspices of the Union, steadily to itinerate through the whole circumference of the country. For thirteen years did he prosecute his self-denying labours. In many places he found a few disciples, who, by his prudence and piety were organized into small Congregational churches. Before his death he witnessed the formation of *seven* such churches, as under :

	Members.
Island of Foula, 24 miles from the mainland	- 23
Bay Hill, Parish of Walls	- 75
Sandness, Parish of Sandness	- 17
Sand, Parish of Sandstaing	- 30
Sullam, Parishes of N. Maving and Deltany	- 46
Scafield, Parish of Midyell	- 15
Norwick, Isle of Unst	- 20

These seven small churches are exclusive of other *three* which exist in the isles: one in Lerwick, under the pastoral care of Mr. Reid, one in Bixter, with which Mr. Tulloch is connected, and one in Sandwick, in the southern part of the mainland, where one of their own members has for some years past acted as pastor amongst them. Although these churches are in an infantile and imperfect state, sequestered from their elder and more opulent sister churches, and needing to be fostered by their bounty and their prayers, yet they are still in a state which calls for thankfulness and hope in HIM who hath not despised "the day of small things."—*Abridged from the Scottish Cong. Mag.*

NEW CHAPEL OPENED IN SHETLAND.

On Sabbath, 24th December, 1837, a commodious place of worship was opened for the use of the Independent church and congregation at Walls, under the pastoral care of Mr. Peterson. Mr. P. began the interesting services by praise, reading a suitable portion of Scripture, and prayer. After which Mr. Clarke, Methodist minister, preached a very appropriate and edifying discourse from Psalm cxviii. 25. and Mr. Robertson, of the Methodist Society, concluded with prayer. The church then "came together to eat the Lord's supper." More than ordinary feelings of joy and gratitude seemed to pervade every bosom, and each seemed to say, "The Lord hath done great things for us." A considerable number of members of sister churches united with them on the joyful occasion. The second service commenced in the evening about five o'clock, the introductory parts of which were conducted by Mr. Robertson. Mr. Peterson then preached from John xii. 32. and Mr. Clarke concluded with prayer. The chapel was exceedingly crowded, and during the first service, a number of people stood in the outside all the time. Mr. Nicolson, of Sand, was to have been present, and to have taken part in the services, but was prevented by domestic affliction.

Mr. Peterson was set apart to the pastoral office over the church in Walls, in July last, when our brethren, Messrs. Black, of Dunkeld, and Russell, of Haddington, were on a missionary tour in Shetland, at the request of the Committee of the Congregational Union. There were few places which they visited in the Islands, where they had more reason to be gratified by the numbers that attended upon their ministry, and the deep impression that seemed to be produced by the preaching of the gospel. It affords us no small pleasure to learn that the labours of our brethren were not in vain, and that the hearts of pastor and people have been gladdened by receiving a number to their fellowship, who were then brought to the knowledge of the truth. The labours of Mr. P. are very acceptable to the people; and we may indulge the hope, that, by the blessing of God, the house of prayer which has been erected chiefly by his own exertions, will be the spiritual birth-place of not a few who shall be to him a crown of joy and rejoicing "in the day of the Lord." The parish of Walls is interesting as the place which enjoyed much of the presence of the late laborious and self-denied Mr. Kerr; and we have no doubt that the precious seed which he scattered there, will yet spring forth and bear fruit many days hence.

Mr. Peterson and the people of his charge, have requested the writer of this notice to express their deep obligations to the Christian friends in Scotland, of different denominations, and particularly in Edinburgh and Glasgow, who so promptly and liberally met his application for assistance in a work which they themselves could do so very little. Their gratitude is more especially due to P. Letham, Esq. Virginia Street, and to J. Macleod, Esq. Brunswick Street, Glasgow, who not only gave liberally themselves, but also sacrificed, with much readiness, a good deal of their valuable time, in obtaining subscriptions from others.—*Scottish Cong. Mag.*

OPENING OF A NEW INDEPENDENT CHAPEL IN BURSLEM.

The Independents of Burslem have erected a beautiful chapel in Queen-street, capable of seating about 350 persons. The opening services were on Thursday, March the 8th. The Rev. John Ely, of Leeds, preached in the morning, and the Rev. T. W. Jenkyn, of Stafford, in the afternoon, to two excellent congregations, who listened with great pleasure to the interesting sermons of the Rev.

Gentlemen. It was expected that the chapel would be incapable of holding the congregation wishful to hear the Rev. Dr. M'All, the evening preacher; and the Wesleyan chapel (capable of holding upwards of 2000 people) was borrowed for the occasion. A crowded and attentive congregation assembled within its walls to hear the Rev. Doctor, who delivered a most talented and impressive sermon, which was listened to with the greatest delight. The collections of the day amounted to upwards of £60. The concluding services took place on Sunday last, when the Rev. James Griffin, of Manchester, preached two sermons.—*Chester Chronicle*.

ENLARGEMENT OF QUEEN-STREET CHAPEL, CHESTER.

The ministry of the Rev. Samuel Luke having been favoured with increasing acceptance amongst the inhabitants of this city, an extensive enlargement of the commodious chapel in Queen-street became necessary. We are happy to learn, from the *Chester Chronicle*, that it has been effected in an elegant and substantial manner, and transcribe an account of its re-opening from that journal of Friday, March 16th.

"The extensive improvements and enlargement of this place of worship having been completed, it was re-opened during last week. The services on this occasion were ushered in by a social tea meeting, which was held in the Exchange Assembly room, on Tuesday evening. More than two hundred, principally ladies, were present. The chair was taken by the pastor of the congregation, the Rev. Samuel Luke, and several excellent addresses were delivered by the different ministers of the city, and other friends. On Wednesday morning and evening, eloquent and heart-stirring sermons were preached by the Rev. Dr. Raffles, of Liverpool, and Dr. M'All, of Manchester. On Thursday evening, the Rev. James Sherman, of Surry Chapel, London, preached an excellent discourse. The Rev. Samuel Luke, preached on Sabbath-day. The collections after each of the services have been most munificent. We have been favoured with the following accounts:—

	£	s.	d.
Collected after a sermon by Dr. Raffles - - -	210	18	9½
— after a sermon by Dr. M'All - - -	111	18	9½
— after a sermon by the Rev. J. Sherman -	81	6	0
On Sabbath-day, after sermons by the Rev. S. Luke -	100	18	10
Making in all the very handsome sum of £504 11s. 1d.			

"This elegant place of worship is an addition to the architectural ornaments of our city. The exterior presents a stone front of the pure Doric order, and is remarkable for its chaste and beautiful appearance. There is a commodious room in the course of erection for the Sunday Schools, on a level with the chapel, which, when completed, the whole will present a front of ninety feet. The interior is arranged in the form of an amphitheatre, and is distinguished for its elegant neatness. The execution of the work does great credit to the contractor, Mr. Royle, of this city. We are glad to observe an addition of two hundred free-sittings in the gallery, and a portion of the centre below appropriated for the use of the poor. It is a gratifying proof of the liberal feeling of our ancient city, that the congregation have been favoured with the use of the Town Hall during their long exclusion from Queen-street Chapel. Our liberal county member, G. Wilbraham, Esq. sent five pounds to the collections. We are happy to learn that the sittings are already nearly all engaged.

ORDINATIONS.

On Thursday, the 26th of October last, Mr. Arch. M'Ewing was set apart to the pastoral office over the church at Ardbeg, Rothesay. Mr. M'Laren, of Greenock, preached at 10 o'clock to the Highlanders, from Phil. i. 21. Mr. Berry, of Ayr, commenced the interesting services in English. Mr. M'Lachlan, of Paisley, preached from 1 John i. 3. Mr. M'Laren then asked the usual questions, and offered up the ordination prayer, accompanied with the imposition of hands; after which Dr. Wardlaw delivered a charge to the pastor, founded upon 3 John 12. Mr. Campbell, of Greenock, concluded the services. In the evening Dr. Wardlaw preached from Isa. xxviii. 10, in the Rev. Mr. M'Nab's chapel, which was kindly granted for

the purpose. Notwithstanding the weather being extremely boisterous, the attendance was good, and the services throughout deeply interesting.

May the blessing of Him who dwelt in the bush rest upon the Pastor, and upon his infant charge; and may the little one speedily become a thousand!

On Tuesday, March 6th, the Rev. Frederic Rice, late a student in the Blackburn Academy, was ordained to the pastoral office over the church and congregation assembling in the Independent Chapel, West-street, Wareham. A special prayer-meeting was held on the preceding evening, to implore the Divine blessing on the solemn services of the morrow. The Rev. Robert Chamberlain, of Swanage, read the scriptures and prayed; the Rev. John Anderson, of Dorchester, delivered the introductory discourse; the Rev. Richard Harris, of Westbury, the former pastor, then proposed the usual questions, when Mr. Rice gave an explicit and gratifying statement of the circumstances which (under providence) led to his conversion to God, and his subsequent choice of the ministerial office. The ordination prayer was then offered up by the Rev. R. Harris; after which a solemn and impressive charge was given by the Rev. Thomas Durant, of Poole, from Col. iv. 17; the morning service was concluded with prayer, by the Rev. S. Bulgin, (Baptist,) of Poole. The evening service was commenced with reading and prayer, by the Rev. James Brown, of the Old Meeting, Wareham; the Rev. Richard Keynes, of Blandford, (the pastor of the newly ordained minister,) preached an important and interesting discourse to the people, from 2 Cor. vi. 13; and the Rev. G. Hubbard, of Corfe Castle, concluded with prayer. The devotional services were conducted by the Rev. Messrs. Stroud, Hubbard, Anderson, and Moreton Brown.

The day being favourable, a great number of persons from neighbouring towns attended, and all present seemed to feel deeply interested in the solemn engagement of the occasion.

MISCELLANEOUS INTELLIGENCE.

SCOTTISH DEPUTATION OF VOLUNTARY CHURCHMEN.

In a former number we announced the expected arrival in the metropolis of a deputation of ministers from Scotland, to oppose the proposed endowment of the new chapels of ease in Scotland. Since our last we have enjoyed the advantage of that visit from the Rev. Drs. Heugh and Beattie, and the Rev. Messrs. Harper and King, of the United Secession Church, from Dr. Wardlaw, of our own body, and the Rev. Mr. French, of the Relief Church. They were received with a cordial welcome by all classes of their dissenting brethren, and we trust that they were made to feel, both in public and private, how highly they are honoured and much beloved by their English associates.

A large and effective public meeting was convened by "the United Committee," at the City of London Tavern, on Wednesday, March the 7th, at which Charles Lushington, Esq. M.P. presided, when resolutions, in harmony with the object, were moved and supported by E. Baines, Esq. M.P., Rev. J. Young, J. Dennistoun, Esq. M.P., the Rev. Mr. Harper, W. D. Gillon, Esq. M.P., Rev. Mr. French, Rev. Joseph Fletcher, D. D., J. Wontner, Esq., Rev. Mr. King, Rev. J. Burnett, Rev. John Blackburn, Henry Waymouth, Esq. and the Rev. Mr. Redpath. The Body of the three Denominations of Dissenting Ministers also held a meeting at the Congregational Library, Finsbury, to receive the Deputation, and to pass a petition to Parliament against the endowment scheme. The members of the Deputation delivered several able lectures on the question of Establishments, at Claremont Chapel, Pentonville; Oxendon Chapel, Haymarket; Weigh House Chapel, City; and at Camberwell, Hackney, and other places, during their visit, and we sincerely hope that their addresses will not only confirm the English Dissenters in their principles, but arouse them to active efforts, by petitions and Parliamentary influence, to

resist a project which, if successful, is, we understand, to be succeeded by a similar claim on behalf of the new churches of England.

THE CREEDS OF CRIMINALS.

Mr. Tulk, one of the magistrates for the County of Middlesex, stated at a recent meeting, that the eight hundred and eighty-seven criminals then confined in the House of Correction for the metropolitan county, belong to various religious denominations in the following proportions :

			Male.	Female.	Total.
Independents	-	-	- 1	0	1
Baptists	-	-	- 2	0	2
Jews	-	-	- 5	1	6
Methodists	-	-	- 6	5	11
Presbyterians	-	-	- 8	3	11
Roman Catholics	-	-	- 75	62	137
Church of England	-	-	- 586	133	719

So that whatever may be the proportion of the general population that belongs to the Church of England, it is obvious that of the prison population in the county jail of Middlesex, she has more than five times as many members as all the separate denominations put together.

RECENT DEATH.

It is our painful duty to record the lamented and awfully sudden death of the Rev. WILLIAM CLAYTON, for several years the much respected Chaplain of the Protestant Dissenters' Grammar School, Mill Hill, Middlesex. On Thursday afternoon, March 15, he was walking with his only daughter, who, as we understand, left him for a moment to look at the cattle, when returning she found he had fallen and that life was extinct! Mr. Clayton was the youngest son of the venerable and Rev. John Clayton, formerly Pastor of the Weigh House, London, and, as is well known, brother to the Rev. Messrs. John and George Clayton. He was educated for the ministry, at Hoxton Academy, and ordained Pastor of the Congregational Chapel, Saffron Waldon, Essex, where he was honoured to increase the interest in numbers and respectability, and to effect the erection of a commodious new Chapel in that town. He was the author of an interesting tale, "The Invisible Hand," and of two volumes of "Rural Discourses." The British and Foreign Bible Society has lost in him an old and steady friend, and the Committee of the Grammar Schools will have no small difficulty to supply the place vacated by his lamented death. He was interred at Bunhill Fields, with many tokens of public respect. The Rev. J. Leifchild and Dr. Fletcher officiated. We believe Mr. Clayton was in his fifty-third year.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS, &c.

Favours have been received from Drs. J. P. Smith—Cox—Fletcher—Henderson. Rev. Messrs. Thos. Milner—J. Brown (St. Petersburg)—Gilbert Wardlaw—Wm. Moorhouse—W. Marshall—Professor Kidd—S. S. Wilson—E. Crisp—R. Redpath—M. Butler—A. Wells—G. Smith.

Also from Messrs. Henry Dunn—C. Selby—J. Conder—Joshua Wilson.—S.—A Congregationalist.